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GENERAL SIR ALEX TAYLOR, G.C.B., R.E.: HIS TIMES, HIS FRIENDS, AND HIS WORK

VOL. II

Ed. Brock

Gen. Sir Alex Taylor, R.E. G.C.B.

(painted for R.E. Mess. Chatham)

GENERAL SIR ALEX. TAYLOR G.C.B., R.E.: HIS TIMES, HIS FRIENDS, AND HIS WORK

BY HIS DAUGHTER

A. CAMERON TAYLOR

Joint-Author of "Classic Christian Art"

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GENERAL SIR ALEX TAYLOR

G C.B., R.E.

HIS TIMES, HIS FRIENDS, AND HIS WORK

CHAPTER X

THE EVE OF THE ASSAULT

ONE moment more must be spent with our army on this the eve of its great adventure—the army which had acquitted itself so splendidly throughout the months of fighting, suffering, and waiting which lay behind it.

What were they doing, those brave men, in the heart of each of whom the gladiators' salutation—"Morituri te salutant"—must have whispered itself as he greeted the rising sun next morning?

Our thoughts fly first to John Nicholson. He had promised to copy Herbert Edwardes' letter[1] on Henry

[1] "What a change for him," Herbert Edwardes had written, "after his long battle of life, his restless strife for the benefit of others—the State, the army, the native Princes, the native people, the prisoners in gaol, the children of the English soldiery, and all that were poor, and all that were down—to close his flashing eyes for the last time on a scene of honourable struggle for his country, and to open them again where there is no more evil to resist, no wrong—all right, and peace, and rest, and patient waiting, with all who have gone before, till earth's trial comes to an end, and a perfect heaven begins. . . . I saw him at Lucknow. Grief had made him grey and worn, but it became him like the scars of a battle. He looked like some good old knight in story. . . . He had done with the world, except working for it

Lawrence's death for Neville Chamberlain—a letter he could not trust himself to read aloud—but, in the stress and turmoil of the siege, had not found time to do so, and it was with difficulty that his friend now dissuaded him from robbing himself of sleep that night, in order to realise this intention. As has been seen, he had been with Chamberlain till past eight, at which hour he left his wounded comrade to make arrangements with his officers for the approaching operations; the army began to assemble at midnight; the hours he slept that night—his last sound sleep—must, therefore, have been few indeed.

Baird Smith was occupied until a late hour in his office, in showing Mr Marten—the civil head of that office, and the Chief Engineer's personal factotum—"how to copy, and extract from his orders, and how to prepare block-plans showing the parts of the city to be operated on, and the streets to be traversed by each column and party after it had effected its entrance, for the guidance of the Commanders."[1] Before dawn he was seated in the company of the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff on the roof of Ludlow Castle, which commanded an extensive view of the field of operations. It had been used by Alex Taylor, under very different circumstances, for the same purpose.[2]

Alex Taylor had spent the day at the different Batteries at the front; had made a fruitless journey under fire to the camp, in order to beg the General for light guns with which to strip the curtain connecting the Water and Kashmir Bastions of its masonry parapet; had visited the Batteries with Nicholson; had directed the inspection of the

while his strength lasted, and he had come to that calm, peaceful estimate of time and eternity, of himself, and the judgment, which could only come of wanting and finding—Christ. . . . Oh no! we had better not wish the news untrue, but try and follow after him."—Lady Edwardes, ii. pp. 33 ff.

[1] Letters from Mr Marten, Vibart, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

[2] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 261.

breaches; was up all night, making the last arrangements; and finally, long before dawn, was at his post at Nicholson's side at the head of the first Column of assault, drawn up between Ludlow Castle and the Kashmir Gate.

There was but little sleep for any member of the Engineer Corps that night; indeed, there had been but little for most of them since the siege began. The officers who were not on duty collected towards midnight in the mess-house to await their orders for the coming assault. These instructions were not received till past 1 a.m., too late to get the men on picquet duty into their places in their respective Columns by dawn, as had been intended. "At 2 a.m.," writes Arthur Lang—who had returned to his post in No. 2 Battery after making his fine reconnaissance of the Kashmir breach—"I was told to go to the camp for orders. I found all our fellows in our mess reading their instructions, poring over a big map of Delhi on which our various routes were marked, buckling on revolvers, filling haversacks with flasks and bread, and snatching a few mouthfuls of supper by candle-light." They were in great spirits—boys as some of them were—an arrangement of little wheels used for sharpening carving-knives, on which the youngest and most hilarious pretended to sharpen their swords, was a centre of merriment. Every mess was a place of similar scenes. The whole camp vibrated with movement and suppressed excitement.

Many men wrote to their wives letters which might well be their last. George Chesney wrote to his wife: "I wonder which of us will be alive to-morrow night! I do hope Taylor won't be killed."

Everyone trembled for Nicholson. John Lawrence had voiced the secret fear of the camp when he wrote: "Old Nick is such a forward fellow, and is only too likely to get knocked over." Men prayed this might not be.

"On the evening of the 13th," writes Captain Barter, who served throughout the Mutiny with the 75th, "each of us looked carefully to the re-loading of our pistols, filling of flasks, and getting a good protection for our heads which would be exposed so much while going up the ladders. I wound two pagris round my old forage cap, with the last letter from the hills[1] in the top, and committed myself to the care of Providence. There was not much sleep that night in our camp. I dropped off now and then, but never for long, and when I woke I could see that there was a light in more than one of the officers' tents. Talking was going on in a low tone among the men; the snapping of a lock, or springing of a ramrod—sounding far in the still air—told of preparation for the coming strife. A little after midnight we fell in as quietly as possible, and by the light of a lantern the orders for the assault were then read to the men. They were to the following purport:—Any officer or man who might be wounded was to be left where he fell; no one was to step from the ranks to help him, as there were no men to spare. If the assault were successful, he would be taken away in the doolies, or litters, and carried to the rear, or wherever he could best receive medical assistance. If we failed, wounded and sound should be prepared to bear the worst. There was to be no plundering, but all prize taken was to be put into the common stock for fair division after all was over. No prisoners were to be made, as we had no one to guard them; and care was to be taken that no women or children were injured. To this the men answered at once, 'No fear, sir.' The officers then pledged their honour on their swords to abide by these orders, and the men then promised to follow their example.

At this moment, just as the regiment was about to march off, Father Bertrand came up in his vestments, and, address-

[1] His wife was then at Kasauli, in the Himalayas.

ing the Colonel, begged for permission to bless the regiment, saying: 'We may differ, some of us, in matters of religion, but the blessing of an old man and a clergyman can do nothing but good.' The Colonel at once assented, and Father Bertrand, lifting his hands to heaven, blessed the regiment in a most impressive manner, offering up at the same time a prayer for our success and for mercy on the souls of those about to die."[1]

Thus, little by little, man by man, regiment by regiment, Corps by Corps, the besieging force assembled, under the cover of darkness and of the thunder of its guns, close to the walls of Delhi.

[1] Quoted by Lord Roberts, *op. cit.*, i. pp. 223–4.

Note.—September 6, Sunday. Strength of effective rank and file in the Delhi Field Force, 8748 men (Artillery, Engineers, Cavalry, Infantry, gun-lascars, native drivers, newly raised Sikh Pioneers, and recruits for Panjab regiments). To these must be added 2200 men and 4 guns from Jammu, 500 (?) Jind Contingent. Strength of the British troops, 3217—580 Artillery, 443 Cavalry, 2294 Infantry (the Infantry Corps mere skeletons). In Hospital 2977 men. See Roberts, *op. cit.*, i. p. 212.

CHAPTER XI

THE ASSAULT

Monday, 14th September 1857

THE grey and solemn hour preceding dawn saw the British army drawn up in five Columns outside the walls of Delhi.[1] Of these Columns, four (Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5)—drawn up in the Kudsia Bagh, and near Ludlow Castle—formed the left attack, and were destined to enter the city through the Kashmir Gate, and through the breaches in and near the Water and Kashmir Bastions.[2]

Column 4—designed to execute a flank attack on the right—formed at Sabzi Mandi, and had orders to force its way into Delhi by the Kabul Gate.

The main, or left, attack (3800 strong) was delivered under the general command of Brigadier-General John Nicholson; Columns 1 and 2 being under his direct personal command. Alex Taylor was attached to him during the operations preparatory to the attack, and during the attack itself. In the event of the latter being successful, his orders were to immediately assume command of the Engineer Corps, with the title of "Director of the

[1] Column 1—1000 strong; Column 2—850 strong; Column 3—950 strong; Column 5 (Reserve), 1000, with 300 of the Jind Contingent. Covering parties, 200 (60th Rifles). The Left Attack, therefore, was some 4000 strong. No. 4 Column, 860 strong (exclusive of 1200 of the Jammu Contingent).

[2] See Map, p. 8.

Engineering operations in the City," and to retain that office until evening, when Colonel Baird Smith would, presumably, be established in the city, and would reassume his command.

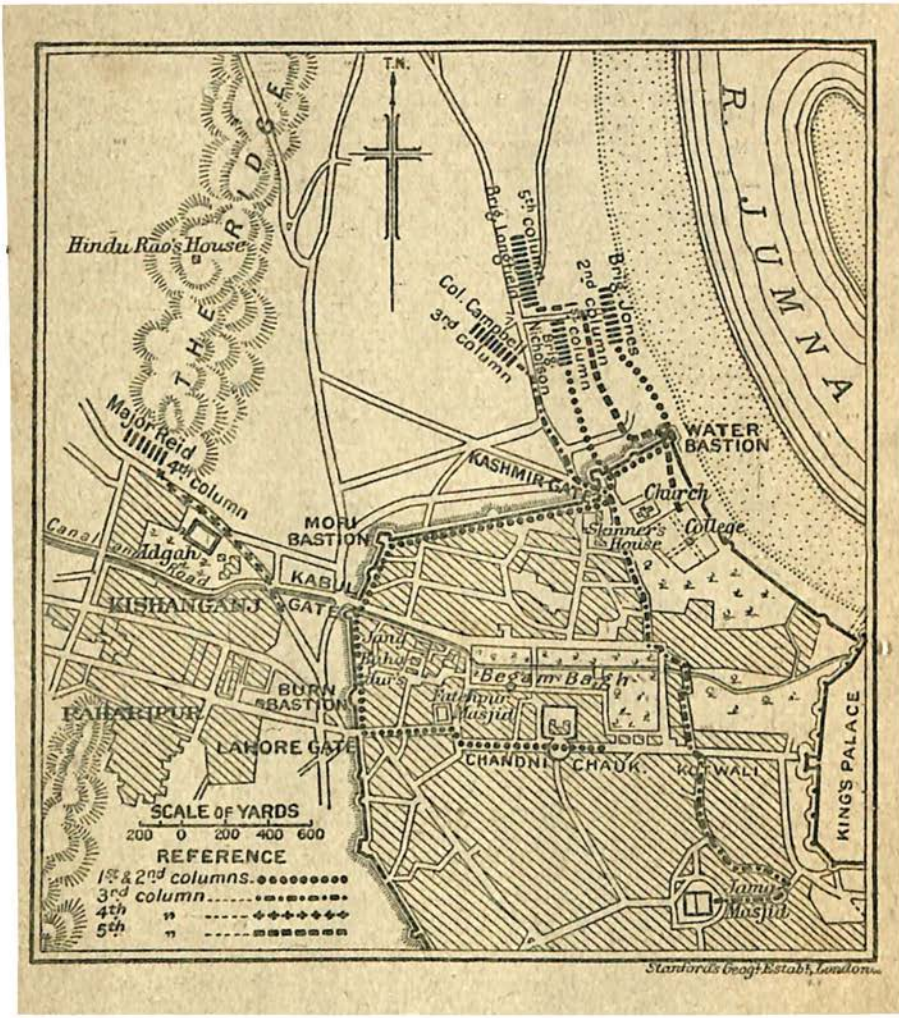
Columns Nos. 1 and 2 had orders to escalade the breaches, to sweep Westward along the ramparts, securing all the bastions from the Water Bastion to the Kabul Gate; having been reinforced at the latter point by the 4th Column, they were to press on to the Lahore Gate; then turning abruptly to their left, to fight their way down the Chandni Chauk to the Jama Masjid, where it was intended that they should find the 3rd Column. The four united Columns were then to take the Jama Masjid and, if possible, the King's Palace. An enormous programme.

Column No. 3 had orders to blow in the Kashmir Gate, and, passing through it, to proceed by a direct route to the Jama Masjid, where it would be reinforced by the three other Columns.

No. 5 (the Reserve Column), some 1500 strong, was directed to follow Columns Nos. 1 and 2 over the breaches, and, having formed a base on the open ground South of the Water and Kashmir Bastions, to give assistance where required.

No. 4 Column—which formed the right attack—was commanded by Charles Reid of Hindu Rao's House, and had orders to march from Sabzi Mandi, along the Grand Trunk Road, through the highly fortified suburbs of Kishanganj and Paharipur—thus protecting the left assault from right-flank attack—to enter the city by the Kabul Gate, where it would come into touch with Columns 1 and 2, with whom it would then fight its way past the Lahore Gate, and down the Chandni Chauk, to the Jama Masjid, where it would find the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Columns. It was 860 strong, and to it were attached 1200 men of the Kashmir Contingent.

Attached to each of these bodies were a few Artillery officers and gunners destined to man the enemy's guns when captured, and two or three Engineer officers. Small



picquets were so placed as to defend the most exposed approaches to the right rear. The camp and hospitals were dangerously unprotected, for nearly every able-bodied man had been called to the front to swell the meagre tale of fighters in the attacking Columns. The danger of rear and

right-flank attacks was great. This was the weakest part of the British position.[1]

Cavalry do not generally play a great rôle in a siege. The siege of Delhi, however, which was never an investment, was exceptional. The enemy, as has been said, "was free to attack from one side of the city, and to run away on another." Under such conditions Cavalry are invaluable. The great danger of the 14th was that a successful flanking attack on the right might be delivered by the enemy after the British army had made good its entrance through the breached ramparts. In view of their immense numerical superiority, the mutineers might entertain a reasonable hope of rushing the camp and Ridge *while* the assaults were being delivered. Had they succeeded in doing this, the position of our successful Columns in the city, played on by guns from the Ridge- and Siege Batteries on the one hand, and from the Palace and Salimgarh on the other, would have been desperate. The all-important task of averting such a catastrophe was entrusted to the Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Hope Grant, and to a troop and a half of Horse Artillery under Major Tombs. This force took up a position between Hindu Rao's House and No. 1 Siege Battery, where they stood in readiness to charge to the support of any Column which might be repulsed, and, more important still, to prevent any flanking attack from Paharipur and Kishanganj.

"The advance to the assault was a sight not to be forgotten," writes Lieutenant Medley. "The sullen roar of our Batteries, which fired with redoubled fury to cover the advance of the troops; the noise of the answering shells,

[1] "In order to provide these five Columns, in all hardly 5000 strong, the services of every man who could bear arms had to be put into requisition. Picquets were weakened to a dangerous extent, and many of the sick and wounded, who ought to have been in hospital, were utilised for the protection of the camp."—Roberts, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 226.

rockets, and round shot from the enemy, as they burst or hissed or rushed over our heads, lighting up the dark but clear atmosphere with lurid flashes; and the silent, steady tramp of the Columns as they moved forward—made a scene which filled one with a mixture of awe and anxiety, and formed a striking contrast to the maddening excitement which so quickly followed. All felt that the hour had at length come for which we had waited so long, and which had been so anxiously expected for months in India and England. All felt that on that day depended our hold on the Empire of India—temporarily, at least—and, though few, perhaps, knew the severity of the task before them, all went in with a stern determination to win. I had not much time for such reflections, however; my own particular work took up most of my thoughts, and an intense anxiety lest anything for which I was responsible should go wrong, pretty well absorbed . . . my mind.

General Nicholson, who led the first Column, and had the general management of the attack, looked quiet, but anxious. General Wilson rode up as we were advancing; he also was evidently full of anxiety. Opposite Ludlow Castle the Columns halted; those who were riding dismounted. Wilson and his Staff[1] betook themselves to the roof of Ludlow Castle, a shell tearing up the ground before them as they walked up its splendid approach."

Neville Chamberlain, Henry Daly of the Guides, and Khan Roza Singh—who were incapacitated by wounds from joining in the attack—took up their positions on the flat roof of Hindu Rao's House, whence they had a clear view of the right, or flank, attack directed by Charles Reid, as well as of the breaches. The battered old house itself had been converted into a hospital for the wounded, and its cellars

[1] On which the Engineers were represented by Colonel Baird Smith and Lieutenant George Chesney, his Brigade Major.

converted into a magazine for the powder and shot of the unmanned battery on the right, the gunners belonging to which had been sent forward.

"I arranged my ladder-men in front," writes Medley, "took my place at the head of the left wing of the first Column, and, getting the word—'Quick march,' wheeled sharp to the left, and marched into the Kudsia Bagh, where we waited till all was ready for the signal. . . . Captain Taylor took me with him to show me the exact ground over which the first Division was to advance towards the breach; stealing to the front, we advanced close to the edge of the jungle by the road that I had gone on the previous night. He then left me to join the General." [1]

It had been arranged that the assault should be delivered before dawn; circumstances conspired to make this impossible. The men of the left attack were in their places before sunrise, those who had been on picquet-duty all night alone excepted, who, necessarily, fell in a little later. The slight delay thus occasioned was a negligible quantity; not so the discovery that, though our Batteries had been active all night, the mutineers had made use of the hours of darkness, not only to partially close the breaches with sand-bags, but to mount some guns, in the teeth of which it would have been suicidal to advance. The guns in our Batteries augmented their cannonade, therefore, instead of ceasing fire. The roar of an artillery duel rent the air. The men were ordered to lie down in their places. The hour before dawn is that at which the vitality of all living things is at its lowest, and our soldiers' ardour—which had been reinforced by a double dram of rum—had plenty of time to cool, as, stretched on the ground, they watched the silvery light of day invade the silent spaces of the sky, and saw the sun embark on its terrible course across the deepening blue of a tropical sky.

[1] Nicholson.

"I well remember rousing my regiment silently at 3 a.m.," writes Colonel Coghill,[1] then the Adjutant of the 1st Bengal Fusiliers. ". . . We marched without a whisper to the Kudsia Bagh Battery, 180 yards from the city walls, which we reached at about 4 a.m., and as the fire was very hot on our front and on our left (from the river), we lay flat on our faces till about 7 a.m. I found myself alongside of a Sikh native officer of Colonel Greene's regiment (the 2nd Panjabis), who wondered, as I did, at the delay. He whispered: 'Wah, wah, Sahib! What is the delay? Are we afraid? It was not by timid soldiers like these that our country was taken!' I whispered back 'Sabr karo, bhai,' ('Wait a bit, brother')." A little later, when the signal for the assault was given, Coghill was able to add: "Now, brother, here's your chance, come along!" but the Sikh then demurred. "Oh, Sahib," he said, "the bullets are falling too thick! Wait a little!"

This period of waiting was exceedingly trying to the nerves, and more especially to those of the watchers on the roofs of Ludlow Castle and of Hindu Rao's House. Sir Neville Chamberlain describes the feelings with which he and his party lived through these long moments of anxiety. "From the roof of Hindu Rao's House," he writes, "we three watched for the Breaching Batteries on the left to cease firing, as we knew that this would be the signal for the advance of the storming Columns. I may add that great was our anxiety to watch the increasing daylight, and still to see the shells flying through the air towards the city walls."[2]

At last the enemy's guns were silenced, and Alex Taylor pronounced the four breaches practicable. John Nicholson went over to the 2nd Column, and, laying his hand on

[1] Colonel Kendal Coghill, C.B., J.P., 2nd European Bengal Fusiliers, 1851–1863; 19th Hussars, 1863.

[2] Forrest, *op. cit.* (*Sir N. Chamberlain*), p. 360.

General Jones' shoulder, asked if he were ready. Being answered in the affirmative, he gave the order for the assault. The Rifles dashed forward with a loud cheer, and extended along the British front. This was the pre-arranged signal. The three Columns moved forward immediately. The explosion party marched towards the Kashmir Gate, and the heads of the two Columns on the left emerged from the Kudsia Bagh.

The assault on Delhi was fitly inaugurated by an act of unsurpassable gallantry on the part of the Engineers, to a small body of whom was entrusted the heroic task of walking to the Kashmir Gate—each man laden with a 25-pound bag of powder—not under the cover of darkness, as had been intended, but in broad daylight, in open view of the enemy, and exposed to the full fury of their fire. Their orders were to cross the drawbridge—of which only a few beams and planks were intact—to place their bags against the gate, and to fire them—saving themselves from the shock of the explosion as best they might—and thus to open the way along which the Infantry, and, presently, the Artillery, could march into the city.

The "explosion party," led by Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, consisted of these two officers of Engineers; three sergeants—Carmichael, Burgess, and Smith; eight Native Sappers, and a bugler—Hawthorne of the 61st. Home and the bugler Hawthorne, followed by four Native Sappers carrying powder-bags, were the first to pass through the wicket which gave access to the drawbridge; they slowly trod their perilous way to the great gate of the city, at the foot of which they deliberately deposited their burdens. So utterly paralysed were the enemy by the audacity of the proceeding that they fired a few straggling shots only, and Lieutenant Home, after laying his bags, jumped into the ditch, unhurt. The bugler jumped after him.

Then followed the second party—Lieutenant Salkeld, who led the way; Sergeants Carmichael and Burgess; four Native Sappers—who were not volunteers, but had been taken in the ordinary routine for the duty—and, finally, Sergeant Smith. On reaching the bridge, the Native Sappers recoiled for a moment before the hail of bullets with which they were assailed; Lieutenant Salkeld drew his sword, and moved into an exposed position to give them confidence; then the procession moved slowly along the two beams which had supported the flooring of the bridge, and laid their powder-bags at the foot of the gate. These were arranged by the British sergeants, while the Native Sappers—so says one of them, Ajudhya Pattak—sought shelter close to the walls.

Sergeant Smith has described what happened after *he* reached the foot of the gateway. "Only Lieutenant Salkeld and Sergeant Burgess were there. Lieutenant Home and the bugler had jumped into the ditch, and Sergeant Carmichael[1] was killed as he went up with his powder-bag on his shoulder, evidently having been shot from the wicket while crossing the broken part of the bridge along one of the beams. I placed my bags, and then, at great risk, reached Carmichael's bag from in front of the wicket, placed it, arranged the fuse for the explosion, and reported 'All ready' to Lieutenant Salkeld, who held the slow match. . . . In stooping down to light the . . . match, Lieutenant Salkeld put out his foot, and was shot through the thigh from the wicket, and, in falling, had the presence of mind to hold out the 'slow,' and told me to fire the charge. Burgess was next him, and took it. . . . He turned round, and said, 'It won't go off, sir; it has gone out, sir,' not knowing that the officer had fallen into the ditch. I gave him a box of lucifers, and, as he took them, he let them

[1] Sergeant Carmichael had been an undergraduate of Trinity College, Dublin. He had fallen off the narrow foothold into the ditch.

fall into my hand—he being shot through the body, from the wicket also—and fell over, after Lieutenant Salkeld, into the ditch.

I was then left alone. Keeping close to the charge—seeing from *where* the others had been shot—I struck a light, when the port-fire in the fuse went off in my face, the light not having gone out, as we had thought. I took up my gun and jumped into the ditch, but before I had reached the ground the charge went off, and filled the ditch with smoke, so that I saw no one. I turned while in the act of jumping, so that my back could come close to the wall, and by that I escaped being smashed to pieces, only getting a severe bruise on the leg, the leather helmet saving my head.[1]

I put my hands along the wall, and touched someone, and asked who it was. 'Lieutenant Home,' was the reply. I said, 'Has God spared you? Are you hurt?' He said 'No,' and asked the same from me. As soon as the dust cleared a little, we saw Lieutenant Salkeld and Burgess, covered with dust—their lying in the middle of the ditch had saved them from being smashed to pieces and covered by the debris from the top of the walls—the shock only toppling the stones over, which fell between where we stood and where they lay.

I went to Lieutenant Salkeld, and called the bugler to help me to move him under the bridge, as the fire had converged upon us, and Lieutenant Salkeld's arms were broken.[2]

[1] One of the Native Sappers, Ajudhya Pattak, states that when, in obedience to the order "Jump," he leapt into the ditch, he was "struck on the leg by what appeared to be an arm, and temporarily disabled." (From a letter written by General Sir Martin Dillon, who had a talk with Ajudhya Pattak in Delhi in 1876. Sir Martin was then Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Napier.) By an unfortunate accident Ajudhya Pattak's name was omitted from the tablet commemorating the heroes of this explosion placed by Lord Napier on the Kashmir Gateway in 1876.

[2] By the fall.

Lieutenant Home came up to assist, but I begged him to keep out of the fire, saying that we would do all that could be done. Lieutenant Home got out of the ditch, leaving me in charge of the wounded, and went to the front, after the Rifles had gone in."[1]

Sergeant Smith then attended to all the wounded, gave them brandy, went to the rear, fetched stretchers—which he had to defend with the drawn sword, so many were they whose need was urgent—got his charges into them, and dispatched them, in the care of the bugler, to the hospital.[2] Then, having assisted to clear away the gate and remake the roadway, he went on to the front, as he says, "to see what was going on."

Directly the explosion had taken place, the bugler sounded the "Advance," with the regimental call of the 52nd; he sounded it more than once, for so great was the roar of the shouting multitude opposing the assaulting Columns (1 and 2) and the din of the rattle of their musketry, that Brigadier George Campbell, who was in command of Column No. 3, heard neither the sound of the trumpet, nor even that of the explosion.[3] He ordered the

[1] Smith's narrative, Kaye, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 674-5.

[2] Sergeants Carmichael and Burgess died almost immediately. Salkeld, Home, Smith, and Hawthorne were given the Victoria Cross, but neither officer lived to wear his decoration. A few days after the assault the General sent Salkeld the red ribbon of the order, hoping that the sight of his well-earned "honour" might give a thrill of pleasure to the shattered hero. He could only whisper, "It will be gratifying to send it home." Home was killed by the explosion of a mine a few weeks later. A year elapsed before anything was done for the native heroes of this occasion. In the general orders of 1858 Lord Canning promised "that it would be his care to see that the brave native survivors of the desperate task of blowing in the Kashmir Gate sh.uld not go unrewarded." Towards the end of 1858, Lieutenant Maunsell, assisted by Sergeant-Major Stuart, examined the claims of the Sappers concerned; on his recommendation they were given honours, and, in some cases, grants of land.

[3] "You never heard such a row," wrote Alfred Wilde to his brother on 22nd October in a letter describing his experiences on the 14th, "the fire of guns, mortars, rockets, and muskets was positively deafening."

advance to be sounded, however, when he had given the explosion party sufficient time, as he considered, to effect their purpose. Slowly, and in single file, did the 52nd cross the beam spanning the ditch in which lay the shattered remains of the gallant Engineers.

When the 3rd Column had thus entered the city, it met the surging masses of the 1st and 2nd Columns, who, meanwhile, had mounted the breaches. Their doings must now be told.

As has been recorded, Columns 1 and 2 were at their posts before dawn. The two wings into which No. 1 Column was broken consisted of H.M. 75th, guided by George Medley—which had the breach in the curtain near the Kashmir Bastion for its objective—and the 1st Bengal Fusiliers, together with Greene's Panjabis, guided by Arthur Lang, who assaulted the breach in the left front of the Kashmir Bastion.

We will first follow the movements of the 75th, taking George Medley's account. "Captain Taylor left me to join the General," he writes, "and at the same moment I heard a loud cheer. The Rifles dashed forward at a run, and, throwing themselves into the jungle, opened a sharp fire on the enemy on the walls. This was the signal. The head of my Column appeared instantly and I waved my sword for the ladder-men to advance. Our Batteries had, of course, ceased firing. A furious rattle of musketry was already pouring from the walls, and, through a storm of bullets, we steadily advanced at a quick walk until we got to the edge of the cover; then, forming the ladders into a sort of line, we rushed towards the breach, closely followed by the storming party, and in a minute found ourselves on the edge of the ditch; but so terrific was the fire from the breach and from the broken parapet walls, that it was at first impossible to get the ladders down into the ditch—

they were necessary to enable us to ascend the masonry escarp below the breach. Man after man was struck down, and the enemy, with yells and curses, kept up a terrific fire, then even caught up stones from the breach in their fury, and, dashing them down, dared us to come on.

At this moment I felt a shock like a blow on my right arm, which made me stagger, and then I knew that I was wounded, a ball having passed through the upper part of the arm, just shaving the bone. The excitement, however, was too great for pain to be felt, and I knew that the bone had escaped, so it could not matter much.

This check on the edge of the ditch was but momentary; the storming parties pushed on, two ladders were thrown into the ditch, and a brave officer, Fitzgerald, of H.M. 75th — who was killed directly — was the first to mount. As soon as I saw my first ladder down, I slid down into the ditch, mounted the escarp, and scrambled up the breach followed by the soldiers. Pandy never attempted to stand when he saw that we really meant to close with him; the breach was won, and the supporting troops, pouring in fast, went down the ramp into the mainguard below."

Arthur Lang, who guided the right wing of the same Column—which was led by Nicholson in person—writes that when the signal for the assault was given, he saw the explosion party rushing in, "heads low, stooping forward, cheering, and running under showers of grape and musketry." He ran forward himself at the same moment with Nicholson, accompanied by the ladder-parties, and followed by the Fusiliers. "We turned to the right at the Custom House," he notes in the diary which he brought up to date a few days later, "and ran up the glacis to the right face of the bastion. It was most gloriously exciting; the bullets seemed to pass over us like a hissing sheet of hail, and the noise of the cheering was so great that I could hardly make myself

heard." So great was it, that, as he says elsewhere, he had difficulty in making Nicholson hear his breathless—"To the right, sir, keep to the right."

"The edge of the ditch gained, down we slid," he continues; "as I slid I saw Medley and the 75th beginning to swarm up their breach, heard an explosion, and was aware of smoke on my right." A slight delay occurred at the foot of the rampart—ladders were not forthcoming, their bearers having been shot down. Impatient of delay, Nicholson seems to have run along the foot of the wall to his left, and to have joined the men of the 75th, who, close at hand, were climbing their breach—a merciful accident, but for which he would literally have led the 1st Fusiliers over the breach—an improperly dangerous post for a Commanding Officer to whom the British army looked not only for heroism, but for Generalship.

Arthur Lang, together with some other gallant hot-heads, too eager to wait for ladders, swung themselves at once on to the berm, eight feet above them—the former noted with satisfaction that, as he had reported, it was too narrow to give safe foothold to long ladders, and that the breach itself was practicable without them—and began to climb its crumbling face. He had not reckoned on the looseness of the displaced masonry, a large block of which, to his horror, began to give way under his grip. He thought his end had come, and cast a despairing glance on to the forest of bayonets below, when two little Gurkhas behind him—they belonged to the covering parties, and had no business there at all—pressed him firmly against the wall; recovering his equilibrium, he pushed on. On reaching the crest of the breach he felt the muzzle of a Sepoy's musket against his chest; pushing this aside, he made a thrust with his sword, which, to his dismay, failing to pierce the enemy's *kamarband*, doubled back, till it almost described a loop. It was an

awkward moment; fortunately, however, a kukri flashed over his shoulders, and his opponent fell, his head and shoulders almost dissevered from his trunk. The little Gurkhas had saved his life, twice in a few seconds.

In the excitement of such a rush a man can do no more than press forward and guard his own life; he cannot but be blind to what is happening even in his immediate vicinity. Thus Lang was never sure whether Nicholson ascended the Kashmir breach with him, or whether he mounted the adjacent Water Bastion breach; nor did he know who were pressing up the ladder and masonry breach with him. He heard that Wemyss of the 1st Fusiliers was first to the top, and that Kendal Coghill ("Paddy Coghill") ran him close. Probably the wave of human beings which crested that breach consisted of a number of young fire-eaters, abreast, one of whom was certainly Arthur Lang. "Over we went," the latter notes in his diary, "all of us: the 75th, the Fusiliers, Greene's Panjabis; then, joining with the men from the Water Bastion, and from the Kashmir Gate, down we tore into the mainguard, where a regular hurly-burly reigned, the routed foe and our disordered columns seething and struggling together. . . . Nicholson and Taylor ran up towards Skinner's House, but, following our orders and the instructions written on our maps, Pemberton and I, and Hay and a few more, led sharp to the right, under the ramparts, along a narrow lane. Ramparts on our right and mud walls on our left; such a place! But on we rushed, shouting and cheering."

The experiences of Kendal Coghill of the 1st Panjab Fusiliers were on similar lines. "At about 9 a.m. the signal was given," he writes. "The skirmishers rushed out at once, closely followed by the ladder parties; as these were nearly all shot down immediately, the stormers rushed out, dragged the ladders along the ground, and threw them into

the ditch, tumbling after them anyhow. A slight check arose here, as the ladders were too short, so we collected débris and dead bodies till the ladders reached the berm, and met our friends at last in close grip. At the foot of the breach, inside the city, was a large enclosure—a *place d'armes*—and this was crowded with the enemy; down the ramp we rushed into their midst. It was close work for about half an hour, and then it became a case of those behind cried 'Forward,' and those before cried 'Back.'"

In the meantime No. 2 Column rushed the breach near the Water Bastion. Wilberforce Greathed and Hovenden—the Engineers leading the ladder-party—were both struck down before they reached the glacis. Greathed crept, bleeding, back to the Kudsia Bagh, and hid himself among its rose-bushes, lest Colonel Greathed, commanding the oncoming "King's," should be saddened by the sight of his brother's plight. The places of the wounded Engineers were taken by two officers of the 8th (Baynes and Metje), who advanced in the teeth of murderous fire. The enemy's sharp-shooters did credit to their training: one volley brought down five ladder-men, and so tremendous was the hail of shot, that, of the thirty-five ladder-men who left the Kudsia Bagh, only ten reached the crest of the glacis. Our men were determined, however, and, in spite of the withering fire and the showers of stones hurled by the enemy from the ramparts, the ladders were placed, the breach escaladed, and the *place d'armes* reached.

The Reserve Column, meanwhile, had followed the storming Columns closely. Alfred Wilde, who was in the former, after speaking of the deafening noise which followed the launch of the 1st Column, says of its members: "On went the gallant chaps under so tremendous a fire that it seemed impossible that a soul should escape. Column after Column, man after man, somehow or other,

got into the city. Then came our turn. Rebel after rebel was rolled over, no mercy was shown the miscreants. All was confusion,—Corps mixed, etc.—and still all pushed on from place to place, driving and pushing back the rebel foe in grand style."

So far success had crowned the British arms. It is a less pleasing task to follow the story of the ill-fated 4th Column, which is that of a series of disastrous accidents. Its composition was unfortunate—detachments from eight different regiments. It was, moreover, associated with the Jammu Contingent, which had orders to precede it along an almost parallel course, and consisted of wild and undisciplined men. Owing to mishaps connected with this Contingent, and the non-appearance of certain guns, it started late and without artillery. It fought its way bravely and with considerable loss through fortified streets, and along suburban roads beside and across which the mutineers had erected breastworks; from behind these they delivered deadly volleys at close quarters, but were dislodged by the determined courage of the Rifles, Guides, and Gurkhas, who rushed these defences with fixed bayonets.

It eventually reached the canal bridge, from which two great streams of Sepoys became visible, the one pouring out of the Kabul Gate, and the other swarming down the dry bed of the canal, up which Reid had proposed to lead his men. It was soon confronting some 20,000 men with 800. The absent guns would have been invaluable at this juncture. Reid had leapt on to the bridge-parapet to make arrangements for meeting the coming onslaught, and was speaking to Lieutenant Maunsell—the Senior Officer of Engineers attached to the Column—when a bullet, striking him on the head, felled him to the ground. No one doubted at the time that he had been killed. When he recovered consciousness he found himself on the back of one of his own

"little fellows" (Gurkhas), who was carrying him to the rear. "Up to this time," he writes in his official report, "all was going admirably; the troops were steady and well in hand, and I made sure of success."

At the same moment that Major Reid fell, Lieutenant Maunsell, who was standing near him, fell also, struck by a bullet between the eyes. The blow threw him on to his knees; kneeling in the midst of the noise and turmoil of a checked advance, and endeavouring to staunch the rush of blinding blood streaming down his face, he felt the back of his head with his hand, asking his orderly at the same time: "Where has it gone out?" Nowhere, happily. It was a partially spent bullet, and the wound it had inflicted, though most serious—its scar never left him,—was not mortal.[1]

Soon after these disasters, the Jammu troops, who had been sent ahead to make a flank movement, as already stated, were repulsed by the mutineers, fell back in disorder, broke into the Column with the enemy in hot pursuit, disturbing its formation and causing the greatest confusion. It was only too clear that it was now impossible for this Column to force an entry into the city, and that the only thing to be done was to effect an orderly retreat, and, by making determined stands, to prevent the enemy from rushing the right of the Ridge and the unprotected camp. This manœuvre was admirably executed.

Neville Chamberlain and his two fellow-watchers on the roof of Hindu Rao's House were the anxious spectators of the repulse. In a private letter written at 3 p.m. that same day, Sir Neville describes what occurred. "Reid was wounded," he says; "the Jammu troops bolted,

[1] The strong skull which stood the young officer in such good stead that day was hereafter a favourite joke against him among the brother-officers with whom the Commandant of Sappers was immensely popular, and the desire to ascertain its thickness was afterwards the alleged object of many a noisy visit to the convalescent in hospital.

lost the whole or portion of their guns, came back on our men, created a panic, and we were driven back in confusion, leaving our killed, and some wounded (I believe), behind. . . . At such a crisis it was not a time to think of arms, or weak legs, or anything else, so down I hurried in a litter, and took command, got the Corps separated, and told off the different defences. In a short time all was quiet."[1] Daly, also, though unable to ride or run, went down to the picquet, of which he took command.

In spite of the strenuous exertions of these two fine soldiers and of the many brave officers and men in the 4th Column, its repulse might possibly have resulted in irretrievable disaster, but for the gallantry of the Cavalry and Artillery drawn up on the fairly open ground between the Ridge and the city walls. Having covered the advance of the Columns, Brigadier Hope Grant had taken up a commanding position near the Siege Batteries—which were otherwise unprotected—and remained there until he saw the 4th Column in full retreat. On its repulse the enemy reoccupied the houses and walled gardens of Paharipur and Kishanganj, from which they opened a heavy fire on to Hope Grant's force. Tombs' Battery, reinforced by Bourchier's Battery, replied with such effect that the insurgents were forced to retire, not, however, until Tombs' Battery had suffered so severely in horses and men that it was with difficulty he could drag his guns off the ground.[2] The danger of a flank attack from the right was thus temporarily averted.

Hope Grant's Cavalry then embarked on the most perilous phase of its heroic day's work. The enemy turned a 24-pound gun from the Burn Bastion (five hundred

[1] Forrest, *Sir N. Chamberlain*, pp. 361–2. "The losses, however, were very severe," so Charles Reid reports—"almost a third of my Column."

[2] See Bourchier, *op. cit.* p. 65.

yards distant) on to this devoted band of horsemen, who —realising that by thus offering themselves as a target they were diverting the attention of the mutineers' gunners from their comrades within their walls, and were thus aiding them to establish their positions—stoutly held their exposed post. Their lines were swept by storms of grape. "Eleven officers of the Lancers had their horses killed under them," writes Kaye. "Nor were the Artillery under Tombs less exposed, or less steadfast under their exposure. Animated by the noble example of their commander, they were equal to any daring and ready to face any danger. The Panjabis, to whom the situation was new—for they were not familiar with grape shot—lacked nothing of the steadfastness of their white comrades, and never flinched from the merciless fire. Watson's Cavalry lost few men, for they were clothed in slate-coloured uniform, and the neutral tint was of good service to them, placed as they were between the white jackets of the Lancers and the scarlet uniform of Probyn's Horse.

For two long hours the Brigade stood firm as a rock, and, as one after another fell, riddled with grape or canister, there was no wavering in the ranks. Every man pressed his knees more tightly on his saddle and took a firmer grip of his reins. There was nothing else in their demeanour to distinguish this grand scene of defiance and endurance from an ordinary Cavalry parade."[1]

To return to the successful Columns which we left on the city-side of the breaches.

They carried out their instructions, but were all left "in the air" at the end of their exertions, owing, largely, to the failure of the 4th Column to carry out its part of the Plan of Attack.

Brigadier Campbell, having entered the city through the

[1] Kaye, *op. cit.*, iii. p. 614.

Kashmir Gate, pressed forward with the Jama Masjid as his objective and Sir Theophilus Metcalfe as his guide. Advancing through narrow and tortuous streets under heavy musketry fire from overhanging windows and roofs, and, once, under that of a gun posted at the end of a side-street—which his men took with a rush and a cheer—he at last turned into the Chandni Chauk, and shortly afterwards found himself face to face with the Jama Masjid. The noble pile, however, was inaccessible to Infantry; its terraces and roofs gave formidable vantage ground to the enemy's sharp-shooters, and its splendid gateways and windows were closed by sand-bags. Having no powder with which to blow in these obstructions, he decided to await the arrival of Reid's Column.

For half an hour he stood there, under heavy fire, ear and eye straining for sight or sound of the expected reinforcements. In vain. Then, as his men were falling fast, and he himself was wounded, he fell back on the Begam Bagh (the Queen's Palace), a building within large walled gardens.[1] Still no sign of oncoming reinforcements. It looked as if Reid's Column had failed. Campbell knew, moreover, that the Jama Masjid was Nicholson's objective, and that of Jones also.[2] But not a sign of them either. If the fact were that both Columns had been repulsed, his position was perilous in the extreme, isolated as he was in the heart of the city, and separated from an insecurely-held base by streets commanded by the guns in the Palace and in Salimgarh, and by thousands of houses filled by mutineers. He determined, nevertheless, not to retire, until probability was exchanged for certainty; and, with this end in view, dispatched messengers to his rear with orders to inform themselves as to what had occurred, and to report the result to him with the greatest speed they could command.

[1] During the execution of this movement Lieutenant Tandy, the Engineer officer attached to the Column, was killed. [2] See Map, p. 8.

After he had held the Begam Bagh with considerable loss for an hour and a half, he learned that Reid's Column had been forced back on the Ridge, and that the other two Columns had been checked at the Kabul Gate. He had no choice, therefore, but to fall back in good order on the free space South of the Kashmir Gate, which was the base of our operations within the city. This he did, occupying the Church, Skinner's House, and some other large buildings in their neighbourhood. This was in the early afternoon.

We have seen that, no sooner had the city breaches been forced by the extreme left attack, than a certain number of the officers and men who had led the 1st and 2nd Columns turned abruptly to the right, in obedience to orders already received. They ran both along the upper *terre-plein* of the ramparts and along the narrow lane below them, clearing and occupying them for more than a mile, *i.e.* from the Kashmir Bastion to the Burn Bastion in the vicinity of the Lahore Gate. This body of men, about a thousand strong, was quite inorganic ; indeed, it was little more than a mixed assemblage of men and officers from different Corps, who had been attracted by the noise and rush in a given direction, which direction was that indicated in their instructions. It was, moreover, leaderless.

It was followed, some time later, by Brigadier Jones, at a pace more in accordance with his age than that set by the young men who showed the way ; and two hours elapsed before Nicholson had completed the arrangements he had to make with Alex Taylor concerning the defence of our base, had fought his way to the Kabul Gate, and had put himself at the head of the united Columns.

"On we rushed, cheering and shouting," is the entry in Arthur Lang's diary, "swept by storms of shot from the side-streets, and by musketry from the house-tops and ramparts ; officers and men fell fast. It was exciting to

the verge of madness. I felt nothing but the desire to rush on and strike. The air seemed full of bullets, and I wondered how much longer I could tear on—unhit. We took tower after tower, and gun after gun, never stopping. On the Mori I shouted out to line the parapet, and give three cheers. Bad advice. We were fired on by our own Batteries outside the walls. We tore bits of red, white, and blue from dead Pandies' clothes, stuck them on a bayonet, and put up this impromptu flag. . . . We hardly seemed to shoot anyone. Occasionally in some bend or tower we caught fellows who had been late in flying, . . . then a sword or a European bayonet did the business. So we went swimmingly along until we had nearly reached the Lahore Gate, where a barricade, with a gun pouring shot from behind it, caused a decided check."

The Column pushed on, however. Our men—borne on the crest of the wave of success—were carrying all before them, and the mutineers—who had seen the tide of white faces overflow their ramparts—were flying in panic before the rising flood. Our star stood in the ascendant; when Brigadier Jones, who had just reached the van of the Column, said to Arthur Lang—"Where are we?" He was horrified to hear that he was on the further side of his objective, the Kabul Gate—the Lahore Gate was Nicholson's goal—and was for ordering an immediate retreat.

"We were all shouting for advance," continues Lang. "But not a bit! All we could then obtain was permission to hold our ground." This, however, was easier said than done. All had gone well, while our men, drunk with excitement and success, had rushed forward, shouting, with a flying enemy before them, and death and destruction in their rear. It was quite another story when they were asked to cool their heels in doorways, and stand cower-

ing behind buttresses, counting their sadly diminished numbers, and taking stock of the position, while the street was swept with grape, and man after man was picked off by unseen sharpshooters on the roofs and ramparts on either side of the narrow street. We were no longer on the crest of the wave, but in the trough. Brigadier Jones had lost an opportunity which might have turned the fortunes of the 4th Column, and saved Nicholson's life. "The men, hiding behind walls and corners, and crouching in the archways which support the ramparts, gradually nursed a panic," writes Lang. "One by one they tried to get back. We stopped them, and staved off the flight for half an hour ; but out they all came at last, and, sweeping past the officers, made for the Kabul Gate."

Brigadier Jones afterwards regretted his decision. "Thinking he had made a mistake," writes Lieutenant Kendal Coghill, who was with this Column, "he tried to retake the Lahore Gate, but in vain. The enemy had returned in strength, had barricaded the road, and had placed guns in position which raked the lane. We made half a dozen attacks, but got whipped back with heavy and unnecessary loss."

The tide had turned.

So far we have followed the lead of the gallant young hot-heads who led the van of the rush from the Water Bastion to the Lahore Gate, and who, if they had been allowed their instinctive, irresponsible way, would have struck while the iron was hot, and might have averted the crushing disasters which followed. We must now turn to the movements of men who were more sober, carried a heavier weight of responsibility, and advanced more deliberately.

Having collected his men, and having established some kind of order, Jones' party followed their more impetuous

comrades to the right. On reaching the Mori Bastion, they looked over the parapet—from which rags of sacred red, white, and blue already fluttered from the point of a bayonet—on to a sinister sight: a huddled mass of Europeans and Natives — Reid's Column in full retreat down the Grand Trunk Road, with a multitude of Sepoys in pursuit. Such a sight underlined urgent need for action. Jones, turning from it, overtook the men to his front, rushed the Kabul Bastion, on which he, in his turn, planted the Column flag,[1] tore down the Lahore Lane, and then, alas! as has been seen, thinking that he was exceeding his instructions, fell back, went forward again, and was repulsed.

Nicholson, meanwhile, had been delayed in the neighbourhood of the Kashmir Gate, where he had to make arrangements with Alex Taylor concerning the defences of the base to be established in the North-Eastern angle of the city; he had then made his way at the head of a small force to the Kabul Gate, marching thither obliquely, in as direct a line as possible. His progress had been slow, necessarily—he had been obliged to make stoppages and side-rushes *en route*, in order to silence the flanking fire of guns at the ends of streets abutting on his course, to check musketry fire from houses, and to establish his own posts—two hours consequently elapsed between the successful escalade of the breaches and the moment at which he assumed command of the tired and disheartened residue of the 1st and 2nd Columns at the Kabul Gate, and heard from Brigadier Jones of the repulse of the 4th Column.

The 1st and 2nd Columns had been opposed, on entering the city, by men discouraged by defeat; he saw that the

[1] This flag was presented by Sir William Jones to Queen Victoria on New Year's Day, 1877, on the occasion of the Proclamation of her new title, "Empress of India."

reverse was now the case; that, elated by success and burning for reprisals, mutineers—who had either formed part of the Corps which had repulsed the 4th Column, or had witnessed their comrades' success, or had been driven from the ramparts—were pouring out of the city, and were marching down the dry bed of the canal and the Grand Trunk Road towards Sabzi Mandi, and he was well aware of the deadly menace of their presence to our ill-supported right flank and rear. He also knew that Brigadier Campbell had probably reached the Jama Masjid by then, and was waiting there for his promised collaboration and that of the 4th Column. Realising that no supports would reach that officer unless brought by himself, he determined to press on and seize the Lahore Gate and Bastion in the teeth of difficulties which seemed to others insuperable. Foremost among these was the character of the defences to be forced, the repugnance of the British soldier to street-fighting,[1] and the condition of the men, who were very tired, both morally and physically, having been on the *qui vive* since midnight, having endured the exhausting nerve-tension and excitement of the assault, having cleared more than a mile of rampart under fire, and having been much tried by the heat and by the absence of anything to eat or drink.

The effort for which Nicholson was about to call was the most tremendous yet made, for the position which the soldiers were to be asked to rush—unlike the Northern ramparts, which had been under the fire of our Batteries for days and nights—was intact, and of unrivalled strength. The Lahore Gate commands the Chandni Chauk—the great commercial thoroughfare of Delhi, which leads through the

[1] However outnumbered, "Tommy" will "go for" anyone in the open with a cheer, but he has a strong objection to being shot by invisible assailants while marching down an empty street.

heart of the city to the palace of the Mughals—and, being of great strategical importance, had been strongly fortified both by the Imperial engineers and by ours. The Kabul and Lahore Gates were connected by a long straight lane, ten feet wide in places, bordered on one side by flat-roofed houses, the parapets of which sheltered a large number of the enemy's sharp-shooters, and, on the other, by a wall furnished at intervals with parapeted turrets some seven feet in diameter, which projected into the lane, narrowing its width to three feet. These, too, were manned by the mutineers. This alley was further defended by two brass guns, one of which, 260 yards from its entrance, raked the passage, and was furnished with a bullet-proof screen. Behind it projected the Burn Bastion, a formidable erection, mounting several guns and capable of holding a thousand men.

Nicholson's party made a gallant rush up this deadly gorge, took possession of the first gun, and rushed at the second, but were driven back by an avalanche of grape and canister from its belching mouth, by a deadly stream of musketry from both sides of the street, and by showers of stones and round shot flung by hand from the house-tops. Beaten back, but not vanquished, they re-formed, and once again rushed into the very jaws of death. Again they took the first gun (which was spiked by Captain Greville of the 1st Fusiliers), and again they recoiled—they were but flesh and blood—before the driving storm of shot, shell, and missiles which threshed the narrow lane like fiery flails.

Nothing could surpass the gallantry of the officers, or their heroic contempt of death. Major Jacobs, commanding the 1st Fusiliers, was the first to fall; but from the ground where he lay in mortal agony he urged the men onwards; in a few seconds five officers (Greville, Butler, Wemyss, Caulfield, and Woodcock), who either belonged to his Corps

or were attached to it, were struck down. The leaderless men again began to fall back.

Then Nicholson, unable any longer to brook the law which bids Generals behold the face of danger from afar, rushed to the front—too much was at stake to permit the toleration of a backward movement—and standing, his back to the enemy, his face to his men, his noble figure drawn to its full height, his sword waving over his head, a very impersonification of the heroic in war, he called on the men to follow him. For one fleeting instant he stood there, calling them forward; and for one fleeting minute they hesitated; at the next it was too late; the wheel of destiny had turned; and the human creature the rough men of the frontier worshipped had fallen, never to rise again.

As he fell, he too urged our soldiers forward; the undefended camp and Ridge, and the Column under fire waiting before the Jama Masjid for the promised support, rose before his failing eyes, and he at first refused to allow himself to be moved until the lane was taken. But alas, that moment never came. He was asking for the impossible. . . . He had to allow himself to be carried, dying, back to the camp; and Brigadier Jones commanded in his stead.

The great disaster of the siege had taken place.

No further advance in the direction of the Lahore Gate was made for several days.

After the breaches had been carried, the buildings in their neighbourhood occupied, and the North-Eastern angle of the city pronounced reasonably safe, General Wilson, accompanied by his staff, rode into the city through the Kashmir Gate, and proceeded to Skinner's House, which became the headquarters of the army for some days. Map in hand, and anxiety in his heart, he took stock of the

situation. His gallopers, who had been dispatched in search of information, speedily returned, and it was soon apparent that the mutineers, whose discomfiture he had witnessed from the roof of Ludlow Castle, had succeeded in checking the advance of our troops within the city.

The reports of his aides-de-camp, like those of Job's messengers, were dark with disaster—they told of the repulse of the 4th Column, and of Reid's disablement; of the check of the 1st and 2nd Columns near the Kabul Gate; of the fall of Nicholson, and of the carnage near the Burn Bastion. To these tragic certainties rumour added the death of Hope Grant and of Tombs. As the General listened to these tales of failure, the firing of Campbell's Column, *as it fell back on its base*, sounded in his ears.

The state of affairs would have inspired anxiety in a more buoyant General; it deeply discouraged Wilson, who had always opposed the idea of taking Delhi by assault as foolhardy. His first impulse was to order a retreat to the Ridge. Fortunately the execution of so fatal a step was strenuously opposed by every member of his Staff, and notably by the Chief Engineer to whom General Wilson turned for counsel in this extremity. "Can we hold on?" he asked. "We *must* do so," was the resolute reply. He afterwards broached the idea of retirement to several officers—to Colonel James Brind, to Edwin Johnson, and others—but was always met with the same unwavering—"Hold on."

At 4 p.m. that afternoon he sent for counsel on this point to Chamberlain at Hindu Rao's House; "Our numbers are frightfully reduced," he wrote, "and we have lost so many senior officers that the men are not under control; indeed, I doubt if they could be got to do anything dashing. I want your advice." The purport of Chamberlain's reply—dictated, his right hand being helpless

—was that we had no alternative but to hold the town until the fall of our last man, and that we had only to persevere to succeed. Nor did he come to Wilson's aid with strong words only, but, as was his wont, with helpful deeds. Hearing of the state of the General's nerves—sleep had deserted him, and, silent and depressed, he avoided his staff—the Adjutant-General wrote to suggest that his Chief should come into camp for a day to enjoy a little rest, while he—Chamberlain—took his place at the head of affairs in the city. Wilson accepted, and Chamberlain—leaving his dearly-loved dying friend, John Nicholson, in camp—went to Skinner's House, and, severely wounded though he was, took the heavy reins of office into his hands, and held them there, with intermissions, for several days.[1]

When night fell on the 14th, the British army lay, not behind the shelter of the Ridge, but within the walls of Delhi. There was a world of difference between the two positions.

The assault had been successful, but the opposition within the city had been stouter than had been expected. The British troops by no means held the position anticipated. Instead of holding the city from the Northern ramparts to the Jama Masjid, and from the Lahore Gate to Salimgarh, they held but a little strip along the Northern wall, a mere foothold, and even that had been conquered at a frightful price. Of the four Commanders of Columns, one alone

[1] Malleson, after speaking of Chamberlain's great qualities—of his complete forgetfulness of self, his courage, resolution, and coolness—says that he was criticised by some for his eagerness to push forward, but adds that he had been assured, not by one, but by many of Sir Neville's brother-officers, that his personal gallantry was one of England's most valuable assets in the long and painful struggle before Delhi.

The ultimate sources of victory are seldom material; a splendid act which sets men's souls aflame is of incalculable military value. It was as a strong-brained and great-hearted hero that Chamberlain, even after he was *hors de combat*, was "worth more than the wing of a regiment" to the Force.

had escaped: Nicholson was dying; George Campbell and Charles Reid were severely wounded. Out of the Force of some 5000 men who had stood in all the strength of manhood outside the walls of Delhi that morning, 66 officers and 1104 men had fallen.

So far we have watched the general movement of the Force on this momentous day, without paying special attention to the rôle played by Alex Taylor, though not without catching glimpses of his activity. We will now devote our attention to his doings on this the most eventful day of his life.

As the Engineer officer in charge of the left attack, he was attached during the assault to General John Nicholson. After the troops had taken up their position on the ground from which the assault was to be delivered, General Nicholson was informed that his command was not limited to the 1st Column, but included that of the 2nd also. On hearing this, he went at once to speak to Brigadier-General Jones, the officer at its head, and, before leaving, told Captain Taylor to exercise the command of the 1st Column during his absence, and to direct the assault, if the signal for the advance should be given before his return.

The contingency thus provided for actually occurred. On leaving General Jones, instead of rejoining Captain Taylor, General Nicholson placed himself at the head of the second wing of the 1st Column, which was guided by Arthur Lang, the result being that the main assault was delivered under Alex Taylor's direction. The latter was always convinced that this circumstance was not accidental, but that his chivalrous General, prompted by characteristic magnanimity, *intended* that the honour of leading the main attack should fall to the man who had designed the Plan of Assault, laboriously, and at great personal risk. The great-hearted generosity — which blossomed into this and many similar

acts—was the source of the love, verging on adoration, with which this man of genius was regarded by his brother-officers and fellow-workers.

The subject of his work at Delhi was one on which Alex Taylor rarely touched in after years. Members of his inner circle of friends, however, still remember the attitude of burlesque horror he would assume on those rare occasions on which they succeeded in entrapping him into speaking of the character of the "honour" of leading an assault, an honour which fell to his lot three times—at Multan, at Delhi, and at Lucknow—they can recall the expression of his face as, with a few graphic words and gestures, he suggested its pleasurable danger and maddening excitement; made them hear the deafening din of shouts and yells with which it was accompanied, and see the long escalading ladders, overhung by cries and dark menacing faces, and clutched by dark hands which strove to push them over, or held smoking muskets, or hurled stones, while below spread an even greater danger should the ladder slip—the serried ranks of the fixed bayonets of our own men, swarming like bees about its base.

Having led the assault, escaladed the breach, and crested the rampart, Taylor's first act was to run, as pre-arranged, to Skinner's House, where he and John Nicholson had a few hurried words together, made a swift examination of the open space before them—which neither of them had previously seen—and agreed on the nature of the defences which would fit it to form the base of future operations. While the General in Command of the Attack and the Director of Engineering Operations within the City were thus engaged, the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Columns launched themselves in the directions prescribed by their orders. As soon as was practicable, John Nicholson returned to his men, and having collected, steadied, and re-formed a small body

of the stormers, marched with them down a main street—the Kabul Road, or Canal Street, probably—with the intention of rejoining and heading his Column at the Kabul Gate.

On starting, he turned to call after Alex Taylor, who was making for the Kashmir Gate, "I am sorry not to have you with me." Never again, alas, did Taylor hear that friendly, resonant voice—never again.

Terrible and tragic was the spectacle which met Taylor's eyes at the Kashmir Gate—scorched and smouldering bodies of Sepoys lying half-buried under the wreckage of the gateway, or flung by the explosion in sinister attitudes upon its débris; and in the midst of the debacle—men dying, in agony, of bullet or bayonet wounds.

The bastion presented a parallel spectacle: guns—dismounted and smashed by the fire from the Breaching Batteries—were tossed about the floor like gigantic playthings, and among them lay dead and dying mutineers.

Taylor, however, had no time for horror, or for thoughts of pity and of death. He had work to do. The explosion had brought down half the gateway only, and the narrow passage was blocked with wreckage. Outside the entrance he could see the naked beams of the dismantled unpaved bridge spanning the ditch, and, on the further bank, a throng of guns, ammunition-carts, and doolies for the wounded, waiting until the bridge was passable. It was his duty to see that it was made so without delay.

George Chesney had already been dispatched from the roof of Ludlow Castle to the Kashmir Gate on the same errand, but had been disabled before he reached the bridge. A heavy shell from the enemy's Battery at Kishanganj had exploded near him, and he had been carried to the hospital, his arm and side pierced by shrapnel. George Medley, however, was there—wounded, it is true, but still able to work—Henry Brownlow also, and Edward

Thackeray. They got their men together, set to work with a will, and soon "the gateway was thronged with artillery and ammunition passing in, and with the doolies bearing the wounded and dying, streaming out—most of the sufferers quiet and insensible from loss of blood, but others groaning in agony. Some came staggering up supported by their comrades, the leaden hue of their countenances and the fixed, glazed expression of their eyes showing that they had been struck in some vital part, and had not long to live": so writes an eye-witness, George Medley.

As soon as the roadway was practicable, Taylor's horse was brought in, and he rode back to the open space destined to form the base of operations within the city, in order to see to the initiation of its fortification. On his suggestion, Alfred Wilde's Rifles were directed to clear and occupy the College and its grounds, which were strongly held by the mutineers. This was done after a bloody struggle. The Sappers then fortified the strong building: closed all its apertures, doors, windows, and the spaces between the columns of the porticos with sand-bags,[1] and erected barricades across its approaches. The shot-riddled Church, "St James,"[2] and Skinner's House had previously fallen into

[1] "With my Corps I seized and held the College, a large building, from which I drove some four hundred mutineers, and which I held during the rest of the siege: that is to say, from the 14th, the never-to-be-forgotten day of the assault, to the 20th. . . . The 30th Bengal Native Infantry were our opponents, but we kicked the scoundrels out with great loss (to them), killing about seventy. They returned again and again during the 14th. At one time I had at least two Pandy corps attacking me, but we had got sand-bags up, and the fire of my Rifles over these was so deadly that the mutineers couldn't enter the compound. Neither could they take away or fire a gun which they had got into the gateway, as some twenty of my best shots had their rifles laid on to it . . . so you see, Ted, the 'Silver Rifles' have been of some use."—Letter from Sir Alfred Wilde to his brother Edward Wilde, written in October 1857.

[2] Built by Major James Skinner, C.B., who raised "Skinner's Horse" (now the 1st Bengal Cavalry), and called "St James," by him after his own patron saint.

our hands, and were quickly put into a state of defence—the former becoming the headquarters of the General and his Staff during the afternoon, and the latter their shelter after nightfall.

No sooner had the way through the Kashmir Gate been made practicable, than implements and stores of all kinds streamed into the city, and were dispatched to the points at which they were most likely to be required. Barricades were erected across the roads leading to important posts. Special attention was bestowed on the defences of the Kabul Gate, its approaches were strongly defended, and the gateway itself mined. The large houses in the Kabul (or Canal) Street, which faced on to the dry bed of the canal and commanded both the street and its surroundings, were taken, loop-holed, and their roofs occupied by marksmen.

The fatigue of the work of initiation, organisation, and supervision which now fell to Taylor's lot was aggravated by great pain arising from a staggering blow on the chest received during the assault from a spent bullet, which had severely bruised his breast-bone; and its difficulty was immensely increased by the loss of the many Engineer officers who had fallen during the assault and the subsequent struggle, whose co-operation would have been invaluable to him as he rode from post to post, sparing no effort in his endeavour to strengthen the grip of the British force on every position it had taken.

The casualties among the officers of the Corps had been numerous. Greathed, Maunsell, Hovenden, Salkeld, and Chesney had been struck down outside the walls. Henry Brownlow—who had entered the city at the head of the Reserve Column, had first expedited matters at the Kashmir Gate, and had then been dispatched by Taylor to the Jama Masjid with a convoy of powder-bags, destined to blow in its gates—had been overpowered by a party of mutineers

near the Queen's Gardens, shot through the groin, and sent back in a dooly to the hospital, where he found that a third of his Corps had been beforehand with him. Lieutenant Tandy had been killed near the Jama Masjid. Ensign Gustavinski had been wounded twice before noon. Lieutenant Pemberton had been wounded in the hand at the Kabul Gate. When George Medley presented himself before the doctor in charge of the hospital, the latter exclaimed—"What, another of you!" and explained that the new arrival was the eighth Engineer officer who had claimed his services that morning.

In fact, the only Engineer officers left to carry on the work of the Corps during the afternoon of the day of assault were Colonel Baird Smith, who can hardly be said to have been under fire, Taylor, Home—the hero of the Kashmir Gate—Geneste, Thackeray, and Arthur Lang.

That Arthur Lang was among the unwounded on the night of the 14th, was simply miraculous. He had spent the whole of Sunday the 13th in Battery No. 2, under heavy fire; had made his splendid daylight-reconnaissance of the Kashmir Breach at 5 p.m. on the same day, and another, under the cover of darkness, at 10 p.m., after which he had returned to Battery No. 2. At 3 a.m. next morning he had been at his place in the 2nd Column; had led the 1st Fusiliers into Delhi, and had been in the foremost ranks of those who crested the breach, and—wild with young excitement—had rushed the ramparts to within a stone's-throw of the Lahore Gate; had seen Nicholson carried, dying, away from the front; had mined the Kabul Gate; and then, being the only Engineer officer left on the North-Western front, had been engaged until late evening on the capture and defence of the houses commanding the Western extremity of the Canal Street. "Having established an advance picquet in a sarai and in an adjoining house, we

stopped, as it was very dark"—so he writes in his diary,—"and down I fell, where I was, and slept. I was completely done, and could not speak, having entirely lost my voice from shouting and cheering all the morning." He had not lost his voice only, but, early in the morning, the scabbard of his sword as well, a troublesome loss, as he had to carry the naked blade about all day, amid the chaff of his friends.[1]

When night fell, Alex Taylor relinquished his temporary command, returned to camp, and slept—off and on—for some seventy hours. His Plan had succeeded, the British army was in Delhi—the relief was great. He himself was fairly worked out. He had been at the front, night and day, with but little respite, since the commencement of Battery No. 1 on the 7th. Before the 7th, the labour and strain of preparation had been intense. During the long days and nights of the siege the weight of responsibility had pressed heavily on his shoulders; the project in process of execution was his, and, though Colonel Baird Smith was its official sponsor, its actual parentage was his, and therefore the moral responsibility for its existence—and he felt it.

He was a Scotch-Irishman, and had a Celt's highly-strung, excitable nerves; these had been on the rack during the long hours in the Batteries and the trenches, when every difficulty that arose was brought to him for solution—and they were many and great—greater than he,

[1] He was continuously on duty at the front from the morning of the 13th, till late on the 16th, when he rode out of the Kashmir Gate to the new Engineer camp in the Metcalfe Park. "I felt intensely delighted to see the few survivors," he writes, "and to actually change my clothes, and be clean and comfortable for the first time since I went on duty at 4 a.m. on the 13th. . . . This park is a pretty place for a camp; we breakfasted in an open tent, with a cool breeze blowing through it, and voted it like a picnic, though the perpetual booming of our mortars in the city spoke of war."

or anyone else, had anticipated. Those who knew him were familiar with the energy he threw into his work—passionate energy, which flung itself in a sort of cold fury against any obstacle which stood between him and the end in view, surged against it, like a wave, crested it, overleapt it, and, finally, carried it away. They were familiar, also, with his power of patient work, and with the importance he attached to accuracy of statement and forecast—and it is they, and they alone, who can measure the suffering that was his when he realised that, agonise as he and his assistants might, they could not get the Batteries into working order in the time he had anticipated.

After this week of almost sleepless effort, preceded by months of hard work, came the maddening excitement of the assault—the long day's work, carried on without a break from the work of the previous day, its fatigue heightened by the exhausting pain of his wound. Then nature asserted herself—the young man slept through the night of the 14th; nor could his friends rouse him at all during the following day; he spent some hours of the 16th in Delhi, but it was only when the next night had run its course that he rose like a giant refreshed, and returned to Delhi, fit for any amount of work.[1]

[1] "Taylor returned to Delhi for a few hours on the 16th, but 'was so knocked out of time,' that he was obliged to return to camp": so writes Arthur Lang in his diary.

CHAPTER XII

THE CAPTURE OF DELHI

WHEN Taylor returned to the city on the morning of the 17th, he found that the British position had not changed materially since the evening of the 14th. On the 15th large stores of beer, wine, and spirits had fallen into the hands of the British soldiery. Ill-fed, thirsty, exhausted by the great heat, and "worked out," morally and physically, by the fatigue and excitement of the preceding day, they had yielded to temptation; and this after months of patient heroism, and at a moment when the fate of the army in Delhi and British prestige in India depended on the clearness of their heads and the steadiness of their nerves. The pity of it! Had the mutineers been aware of the condition of certain sections of our troops, or had they combined to deliver a concerted attack on the affected areas, it is hard to limit the extent of the catastrophe which might have followed. Fortunately, they did nothing decisive. These disgraceful circumstances were met by drastic measures: bottles were smashed and barrels broached. The dust of Delhi drank the precious liquids so sorely needed in the hospitals. Happily, only a small section of the army abandoned itself to humiliating debauch.

On the East, fighting went on all day. A Battery was erected in the College Gardens, which played both on

the Fort at Salimgarh and on the Palace ; and, a breach being effected in the walls of the magazine, this was captured next day after a stout resistance.[1] It contained 171 guns and howitzers, most of them of large calibre, and immense stores of shot and shell. In one corner of its precincts stood the ruins of the magazine for small-arms ammunition, blown up on the fatal 11th of May by Lieutenant Willoughby, who on that occasion destroyed six millions of ball-cartridges.

Meanwhile the rebels apprized the general situation correctly. They knew that the successful assault was the beginning of the end, and fell—automatically—into the two classes into which a defeated army naturally breaks, one of which marches under a banner bearing the motto "Sauve qui peut," while the other concerns itself with the manner in which it can sell its life most dearly. The first act of an army in this phase, that which precedes decomposition, is to draw in its lines—to centralise. On the night of the 15th–16th this process of centralisation was inaugurated by the evacuation of Kishanganj by the mutineers ; this suburb was instantly occupied by British troops.

On the following morning immense bodies of rebel troops, accompanied by thousands of fugitives, left the city by its Southern exits, with the intention, ostensibly, of falling back on such Southern centres as Cawnpore, Lucknow, Agra, and Allahabad. Once outside the city, however, the rebel force was greatly weakened by desertions ; hundreds of men—realising that they had lost their throw—made for their homes, and, when next seen, were driving the harmless plough. The soldiers of tougher fibre who did not take refuge in flight, were either veteran

[1] September 16. It was on this occasion that Edward Thackeray won his V.C. See *ante*, vol. i. p. 218.

Sepoys, who remained in Delhi to cover the retreat of their comrades and to keep the white army at bay; or Muhammadan fanatics, eager to die a martyr's death; or faithful adherents of the Mughals, who had determined not to survive a lost cause. It was in the nature of things that the members of this forlorn hope should die hard.

Immediate success may be said to have attended British efforts on the left.

On the right, however, no advance had been made since Nicholson's repulse on the 14th. Owing to the heavy loss of officers in his command, the troops which had composed it were undoubtedly out of hand; they had seen their General, most of their officers, and too many of their comrades mown down like grass in a narrow lane; and—worn out by fatigue, and humiliated by failures which were not untainted by shame—some of them had succumbed to the attractions of drink and loot. Nothing dashing was to be expected of them, as General Wilson said.

It was evident, therefore, that the system of open force hitherto employed must be superseded by one entailing less exposure and promising greater certainty of result. Men looked to the Engineer Corps for a plan. "Ever to the front," writes Kaye, condensing the information supplied him by officers who were eye-witnesses of what they described, "ever . . . fertile in resource, the Engineer Brigade had much work to do, and did it well in this conjuncture. It had been terribly shattered during the assault. One after another the subalterns attached to the different Columns had fallen beneath the fire of the enemy. Few had escaped the perils to which they had been exposed. But happily Alex Taylor was alive . . . there was work for his active brain to do. . . . All the professional resources of 'those who were left' were brought into play."[1]

[1] Kaye, *op. cit.*, iii. p. 624.

Delhi, like most oriental towns, consisted largely of fine houses standing within walled enclosures containing gardens, pleasure-houses, servants' huts, sheds, etc.; usually one side only of this complex of walls and buildings abutted on to the street, which—in many instances—was quite narrow and bordered by small houses. Taylor proposed that all regular street-fighting should be abandoned, and that the attention of the Force should be concentrated on these large houses, which would obviously form strong points of vantage if their roofs and windows were occupied by sharpshooters.

This had been done previously, but not systematically. The following was the *modus operandi* now adopted. A large house was taken by assault, and held by sharpshooters, directed to clear the ground it overlooked. When this was accomplished, the next large house in the line of advance was quietly approached—not through streets as before, however, but *across* the medley of smaller buildings, yards, and enclosures already alluded to, through which it was the Sappers' duty to "pick" and "sap" a sheltered way: an unpleasant task, for every gap or hole they made might, in its initial state, disclose the muzzle of an enemy's musket, or, in a later phase, a body of Ghazis, who cared little for their lives and much for the honour of dispatching an infidel.

The point of this system was the avoidance of streets during the advance—but the use of them as thoroughfares the moment their heads were secured, and the houses commanding them seized, garrisoned, barricaded, and loop-holed. This project was put into effect, and the terror inspired by it had not a little to do with the subsequent complete evacuation of the city. No home, no spot, however secluded, was safe from sudden invasion.

The large houses so unceremoniously broken into were

some of them built round courtyards, cool with the spray of fountains, melodious with the song of caged singing-birds and the whisper of water running in shallow marble channels. They were sweet also with the perfume of flowers which covered shrubs growing in gaily painted pots, or gemmed the creepers with which the quaint wooden balconies and external stairways were festooned. The cool, moist air, the quiet beauty and peace of these secluded places, must have struck strangely on the nerves of the officers—with their following of wild Sikhs and rough English privates, hot with the passions of war—who broke into them, out of the dust and scorching heat of the outer street.

The rooms of these large houses were sometimes furnished with the tasteless splendour affected by the opulent oriental whose equilibrium has been disturbed by the influence of the West. The dim light—filtering into lofty rooms through the rich carving of pierced shutters—would strike a faint prismatic radiance out of immense crystal chandeliers which depended from the ceiling, and were reflected in long procession in the vast gilt-framed mirrors with which the walls were hung. The marble floors were soft with priceless carpets, on which stood divans draped with richly coloured fabrics, and sometimes gorgeous velvet chairs, representative of the worst and most expensive phase of Anglo-Indian Early-Victorian taste. Musical boxes, jewelled mechanical singing birds, and heavy scents completed the *mise en scène*. The splendour of these palaces must have stimulated the religious zeal of the Sikh freebooter—familiar from his childhood with his Guru's prophecy that the wealth of Delhi would be the loot of the "Disciples" when white men came from the West to tear down the Empire of the Great Mughal.

The progress of the invaders led them more frequently, however, through humbler houses, and, very largely, through

the squalid and insanitary precincts of native palaces. The little houses were usually empty. More than once it happened, however, that the men of war stumbled up dark wooden stairs into a dim attar-scented room inhabited by a dainty fluttering thing in gauze and tinsel, with painted eyes and rosy finger-tips. Into the street she was bundled —jingling bracelets, armlets, and all—and had to find her frightened way through barricaded streets and beneath loopholed houses to a shelter nearer the heart of her city. Sometimes, alas, the Sikhs and Gurkhas would break their way into a room in which a wounded Sepoy was being nursed by his women.

It was often necessary to defend exposed points upon these routes; to erect a screen, for instance, across a street swept by flanking fire, or to run one obliquely across an exposed yard; these were sometimes built of sand-bags, but more often of anything that came to hand—mirrors, divans, sandalwood shutters, fine painted doors, and the like. Occasionally a glittering embroidered curtain, suspended on a line of string, sufficed, for man does not fire on what his eye does not see. The parapets on the house-tops were similarly constructed. Passing strange to look on were certain of the Engineers' shelters.

Thus, little by little, the invaders occupied a widening area along the Northern and Western ramparts. It was slow work, however, and the progress made on the 17th was but small. "This was due, probably," says Taylor, "to the Engineer officers locally in charge not having been given sufficient command of the troops temporarily under their direction, and to the natural objection of Commanding Officers to the breaking up of their regiments into small detachments."

On the 18th, the same system was carried out on a larger scale, but still with inadequate results. When night

closed in, the British position was substantially unchanged: its extreme right rested on the Kabul Gate, its centre on the Bank, its left on the College; as on the night of the 14th, Salimgarh, the Palace, and the Jama Masjid were still in the mutineers' hands, together with the Lahore Gate and Burn Bastion—the fortresses commanding the Chandni Chauk.[1] Colonel Greathed had led a considerable force against the latter post that day; but the fatal hour in the narrow lane before Nicholson fell had shaken the men's nerves, and they would not follow him.

The Burn Bastion, however, was a position of great strategical importance, and it was essential to success that it should be taken. The aspect of affairs was not encouraging.

It being impossible to take it by assault, Taylor was convinced that the only alternative was to capture the large houses in its neighbourhood, and thus to command its approaches. With this end in view, he spent the greater part of the 18th in prowling about the thickly overbuilt quarter lying between the Kabul and Lahore Gates, the Canal Street, and the Chandni Chauk. It seemed to him that the fortifications on the ramparts—the Burn Bastion and Lahore Gate—and the Chandni Chauk, were strongly held by the mutineers, but that the majority of the houses in the area in question were either deserted or occupied by their usual inhabitants, not by fighting men.

He succeeded in penetrating as far as the Chandni Chauk, cautiously he entered one of the houses facing on to it, and discovered it to be deserted. Creeping to the window, he found himself in alarming proximity to the head of the Sepoy sentry pacing up and down outside. Late in the afternoon he persuaded Henry Norman—then Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General—who had considerable influence

[1] See Map, p. 8.

with General Wilson, to return with him to the house to verify his assertion. The two young men found the building still empty, a few Sepoys on guard holding the street with the same negligence as before. After more than one such adventurous reconnaissance, he drew up a definite Plan of Attack, which had the Burn Bastion for its objective. This he took to Colonel Baird Smith, who referred him to the General. The latter, who had been informed by Henry Norman of the character of the position, accepted the scheme, gave him a letter to General Jones—who was still at the Kabul Gate—ordering him to place some five or six hundred men at Taylor's disposal next morning.

At dawn the Force temporarily under his command—broken into two parties, guided respectively by Lieutenants Geneste and Lang of the Engineers—advanced along prearranged lines through houses and courts, with eminently satisfactory results. Some thirty houses were assaulted during the day, and carried with a very trifling loss. "Being large isolated houses, they were nicely exposed to flanking and cross-fire from the troops occupying the houses already captured in their rear. When attacked under these conditions, on no occasion did the enemy wait to receive the actual assault. Working ahead in this way, possession was obtained—just as the sun was sinking—of a building so close behind the gorge of the Burn Bastion, and so entirely commanding it, that after the exchange of a few shots, the enemy abandoned the post, which fell into British hands shortly after dark. So greatly had the troops lost tone, however, that it was with the greatest difficulty that they were induced to take the post, although it was obviously abandoned, or to hold it when taken, and this although no attempt to regain it was made by the mutineers." So writes Taylor. And thus the famous Burn Bastion, in the attempt to take which Nicholson had laid down his life, fell into our hands. Leaving the

troops in possession, Taylor reported the gratifying result of the day's work to Brigadier Jones, and then to General Wilson, who had just returned from a day's rest in camp, and was much cheered by the reception of such good news. Such, in the bare outline, was the successful movement which was followed up by the general withdrawal of the mutineers from Delhi, and which is characterised by Sir John Kaye "as not one of the least of Alex Taylor's great services." [1]

Two fuller descriptions of the taking of the Burn Bastion lie before me: one written by Lord Roberts, then a young man of twenty-five, who was one of Taylor's most capable assistants on that occasion, and the other by Arthur Lang, whose boyish and altogether delightful diary, written for his own eyes only, and with splendid disregard of syntax, puts us into intimate contact with the events in which he played so worthy a rôle. The working numbers of the Corps were so reduced that Taylor was obliged to issue an order forbidding them to expose themselves unnecessarily by heading every dangerous reconnaissance, or sally, as was their wont; reminding them that they were there to direct and not to fight, an order which, in his own practice and in that of his brother-officers, was usually more honoured in the breach than in the observance.[2]

"The city reports as to where the Pandies are gone are, of course, various, and lying," writes Lang; "some say that the great mass have marched to join the Gwalior troops, leaving a few to hold us in check a few days, in order to give them a good start. . . . I really think Meerut and

[1] Kaye, *op. cit.*, iii. pp. 626–627.

[2] Arthur Lang makes the following hurried and delightfully boyish reference to this order in his diary:—"Taylor won't let any more of us lead parties," he writes; "the Brigade is barely efficient now, and *not another can be hit*."

Agra are threatened, while a few Ghazis keep us at bay in these streets.

I think we must take the Lahore Gate to-morrow. I went in the evening, and paid Brigadier Jones a visit in his little house near the Kabul Gate, and he showed me the plan of the houses through which we shall advance, . . . house by house, down the zigzag street from the Canal Street to the Chandni Chauk.

On the morning of the 19th, I went with the Brigadier to Jang Bahadur's grand house[1] somewhere up the Canal Street on the right. There I met Taylor and Fred Roberts, and with them rode up a lane to the right, to our advanced picquet in that direction, where we found Geneste. We set to work to cut our way through the houses towards the Burn Bastion, and, finally, succeeded in occupying two houses which overhung the fatal lane just at the point at which we had been repulsed on the 14th, and immediately lined their roofs with sharpshooters. From this vantage-ground we could shoot anyone in the bastion, and commanded just enough of the lane to cut off a 5½-inch mortar which they had placed there. Just before dusk we broke open the last gate which opened on to the lane."

Having done this, Lang—in spite of the value then set on the lives of Engineers—was in the act of rushing out at the head of the soldiers, when Taylor caught him by the arm. "No more of that, young fellow," he said, "those days are over." The young Engineer had to yield the post of honour and danger to Captain Gordon of the 75th, who was commanding the party: he formed up his men, and, after some little hesitation—for they were deplorably unnerved, and the lane was dark, not only with the gathering shadows of night, but with the hideous

[1] He had slept opposite it on the 15th, in the open street, with a low wall of sand-bags at his head to protect him from bullets.

memories of three repulses—they rushed across the five yards separating them from the bastion, into which they broke, without losing a man. So unnerved were they, that shortly afterwards a cry was raised—"The place is mined! mined!" and the officers had actually to stand in the gateway to prevent a stampede. This cry was raised more than once, with similar disgraceful results. To obviate a disaster, and to reassure the men, the General—at Taylor's request—sent several members of his staff to spend the night in the bastion.

"No sooner had we taken the bastion," Lang continues, "than I got a working-party together, and, taking Pandy's sand-bag parapet, formed a traverse across the street, behind which guns were placed. As I was doing this, a Ghazi Musalman sloped quietly by the ramp, in the dark. When he reached the top, Wauchope put his hand on his shoulder, saying 'Kaun hai?' ('Who are you?') He started, completely and absurdly taken aback, and afterwards confessed to being a Ghazi, who had been sent Eastward for information, adding that he was returning to tell his comrades that the bastion was to be attacked shortly by Sikhs and Europeans. He had sauntered in without the faintest suspicion that his friends had evacuated the post, and that we had occupied it. He was taken to the embrasure, shot, and his body tossed into the ditch." Lang curled himself into the same embrasure that night—it being a sheltered nook—and, stretched on that stony bed, slept the sleep of the young and tired. Such are the fortunes of war.

At daybreak next morning various reconnoitring parties were formed, and directed to move in parallels on to the various large houses commanding the Chandni Chauk, with the intention of eventually rushing the Lahore Gate from the bastion, and, after having taken it, to advance down the

Chandni Chauk on to the Jama Masjid, the Palace, and Salimgarh.

Roberts and Lang were again in the same party. "Before daybreak," writes Lang, "I was off again with twenty-five of the 2nd Fusiliers—the best fighting regiment here, I think—and twenty-five of Greene's Sikhs. The minarets of the Fatehpura Masjid were my beacons, and towards them I made my way, occupying commanding-houses, and opening ways into courts and lanes." While sapping through houses and yards, after the fashion of the previous day, Roberts and Lang came on a posse of some fifty fat shopkeepers, who had sought shelter in one of the walled yards broken into by our troops. As they were obviously both terrified and harmless, and said they were inhabitants of that quarter of the city, the two young officers intervened between them and the Sikh soldiery—who would have cut their throats—and told them that their lives would be spared if they would take them safely to some building whence they could observe the Lahore Gate. This was done by their trembling guides, and, like Taylor and Norman on the previous day, the two young officers found themselves presently in an upper room overlooking the Chandni Chauk, and only fifty yards from the Lahore Gate. "We were just at the bend of the street," writes Lang. "Looking to my right, I saw Geneste's party cautiously emerging, just by the Lahore Gate. All was deserted; we might have entered the night before." Taylor came up with his party at about the same time, and, seeing that the street was empty but for a few sentries and Sepoys, declared—so Lang notes—"that we should take the street without the loss of a single man." "After events fully justified this opinion," his subaltern adds.

Troops were then brought forward and the Lahore Gate seized almost without opposition. Lang, meanwhile, having

rushed back to the picquet which had been his starting-point, collected the Europeans still there, and such of the Sikhs as he could detach from rapturous looting, and marched with this little body up the silent Chandni Chauk—occupied only by the enemy's deserted sick and wounded—towards the sound of firing in the direction of Salimgarh, which—though they were ignorant of the fact—was just then falling into British hands.

Then came the cry—"The Palace! The Palace!" Troops were already pouring from our base on this, the last stronghold of the mutineers. Ensign M^cQueen,[1] with his usual audacity, reconnoitred up to its closed gateway, and reported the place deserted. Arthur Lang, too—always to the fore on such occasions—went up to the aforesaid gate, and, peeping through the chink of light separating its two wings, looked down the throats of four great guns loaded to their muzzles. Sepoys, sheltered by the parapets above, began to fire—blank ammunition, it is believed, for no one was hurt. A slight delay occurred here, for it was the General's wish that the honour of blowing in the Delhi Gate of the Palace should fall to the lot of Duncan Home, one of the heroes of the Kashmir Gate. When the smoke of the explosion cleared away, in rushed the 60th Rifles and the 4th Panjab Infantry (Wilde's regiment). The way to the royal apartments was crowded with wounded men, but no opposition was offered, except by some few *Ghazis*. "One of these, a Sepoy in the uniform of a Grenadier of the 37th N.I., stood quietly about thirty yards up the passage with his musket on his hip.

[1] The late Lieutenant-General Sir John M^cQueen, K.C.B. Forty-five years later Lieutenant M^cQueen—a volunteer from Brownlow's Panjabis—was cut off at Berjensel while endeavouring to rescue one of his men. The Boers called on him to surrender; this he refused to do. His body, when recovered, was pierced by five bullet-wounds, while a heap of cartridge-cases beside him showed that he had died fighting to the last. *Tel père, tel fils.*

As we approached he slowly raised his weapon, and fired, sending his bullet through M^cQueen's helmet. The brave fellow then advanced at the charge, but was, of course, shot down," writes Lord Roberts.[1]

The Palace of the Mughals was in our hands.

Taylor had accompanied this party, but soon escaped from the distressing carnage which followed, and from the spectacle of one of the most beautiful buildings in the world in the rough grip of looting soldiery. Together with some other officers, he made for the Jama Masjid, the minarets of which commanded an unrivalled panorama of the city. All the members of the party were in high spirits, and much excited. They had attained that for which they had endured so much throughout that hot summer, and had made theirs at so heavy a price—Delhi.

The Irishman, "Musha," must have been uppermost in the Scotchman, Alex Taylor, just then—for he rode his horse up the great flight of stairs leading to the mosque. Roberts, Lang, and he then climbed one of its lofty minarets and emerged on to the giddy gallery from which the voice of the mullah, proclaiming God's unity and calling the faithful to prayer, was wont to sound. The country-side and ruined city lay like a map at their feet. They saw Jones' picquet at the Ajmer Gate ; and the Union Jack fluttering from the Palace walls, and from the bastions on the ramparts. They saw our Cavalry riding round the city walls to the almost deserted rebel-camps outside the Delhi and Turkman Gates. They saw parties of looting Sikhs and Europeans bursting in and out of houses throughout the city, like hounds at full cry. They saw the figures of belated men and women, who had lost their all, fleeing along the flat roofs of houses towards the Southern gates of Delhi.

To the North lay the deserted Ridge, beyond which the

[1] Roberts, *op. cit.*, i. p. 248.

thoughts and prayers of that little group of officers—lifted so high above the squalor and misery of the stricken city—must have flown to the little mud bungalow in their late camp, in which the stronghold of the most precious life in India —Nicholson's noble body—was slowly yielding to the relentless sap of the arch-enemy—Death.

Behind the Ridge were the hospitals in which so many of their comrades—they numbered thousands—sick and maimed, struggled with the same enemy; and, further to the left, was the little space of ground which garnered his trophies—the Cemetery, in which the bodies of more than a thousand of England's gallant sons had been recently laid.

Immediately below them lay the great austere white court of the Muhammadan place of prayer, filled with British soldiers drinking beer and rum. The Palace also was filled with soldiery, who invaded the empty zenanas, took the property of the shahzadas into their dirty hands, walked through the splendid marble bath-rooms of Kings, and sat on the crystal throne of the Mughals. "We fairly hated the sight," writes Lang, "so Taylor, Roberts, and I rode to headquarters." Depressed, disenchanted, the reaction from great and prolonged excitement had set in.

The two Engineers joined their sick Chief at Skinner's House, where he had been all day—and made their report. That evening, however, in the cool open tent in the wooded grounds of Metcalfe House, they drank, in champagne, to the gallantly-won success of the British arms.

At sunrise the next morning British guns fired the royal salute.

On the same day Hodson made his adventurous capture of the King, and, not twenty-four hours later, his still more adventurous capture and execution of the King's grandson and two of his sons. The bodies of these Princes—the two elder of whom were well known in the capital, and were

believed to have taken an active part in the massacre of white women and children in the Palace in May—were flung on the hot pavement outside the "kotwali" (police-station), where all might see and mark. Now and again a group of Sikhs, awe-struck and triumphant, would stop to gaze on them, murmuring their battle-cry—"God and the Guru." Two centuries had not elapsed since the Mughal Emperor Aurungzeb had exposed the head of Tegh Bahadur Khan near that very spot. Their Guru's prophecy had been fulfilled.

"So ended this great siege—one of the most memorable in the annals of England," writes Sir George Forrest. "It had lasted for more than twelve weeks, and during that time the small force of besiegers had fought more than thirty well-contested combats against a vast and disciplined host. Neither heat, nor rain, nor pestilence destroyed their courage, or crushed their spirits. In the men's tents they made merry, and, like the Greeks before Troy, they had their sports. Stricken to death, the soldier told his officer he would soon be up again, and ready for a brush with the mutineers.

These warriors—worn with disease, worn with constant duty under a burning sun, reduced in numbers—stormed, in the face of day, a strong fortress defended by 30,000 desperate men, provided with everything necessary to defy assault. The list of killed and wounded bears testimony to the intrepidity displayed by all arms of the service. The effective force at Delhi never amounted to 10,000 men; of these 992 were killed and 2845 wounded—total 3837.[1] Many more died from disease and exposure.

These returns bear testimony to the severe loss suffered,

[1] Of the Engineer officers, two-thirds, and of the Engineer Department 293 men, were killed or wounded.

and the dispatches record, in simple and manly terms, a tale of which Englishmen can never grow weary as long as they reverence deeds of valour. They set forth the indomitable courage and perseverance, the heroic self-devotion and fortitude, the steady discipline and stern resolve of English soldiers."[1]

[1] Selections from Letters, Dispatches and State Papers, Military Department, Government of India, *The Indian Mutiny*, 1857–58, 3 vols., by G. W. Forrest, Calcutta Military Department Press, 1893, p. 90 of Introduction, vol. i. (Delhi).

CHAPTER XIII

AFTER THE SIEGE

THE struggle for Delhi was over.

Colonel Baird Smith, therefore, asked permission to withdraw, and left for Roorkee, so ill that he had to travel in a recumbent position, either by bullock-cart or dooly. To Alex Taylor, consequently, passed the command of the Corps at Delhi—greatly to his regret, for he would have preferred to join the immediately organised Column of pursuit. His wish had been supported by Colonel Baird Smith, who was well aware that an active and adventurous life offered his subordinate's qualities their fittest field; General Wilson, however—who had been in frequent contact with the young Engineer since the day of assault, and who disliked changes in the *personnel* of his advisers—preferred to keep him at his side. In the course of the following weeks, during which his official relations to his General were of the closest, Taylor learned to appreciate his Chief's great qualities—the disinterested rectitude, the sincerity, and the generosity—which transmuted members of his Staff—such men as Sir Henry Norman and Colonel Turnbull—from subordinates into life-long friends and champions.

The work which now fell to his lot was that of putting the siege-wrecked fortifications into temporary repair, and of making Salimgarh and the Palace strong enough to prevent any return of the mutineers and to overawe the city should an emeute occur.

It is easy to imagine the interest with which he, and all the English officers present, examined the interior of the rebel posts from which they had been most frequently attacked. Charles Reid—who commanded the right attack from the day on which the Ridge was captured until he was carried into the hospital on 14th September—was astonished at the great strength of the North-Western suburbs—Kishanganj and Paharipur, etc.—which had been rendered formidable by the mutineers' breastworks, batteries, and other defences. The battered, bullet-pierced walls of the canal-bridge and sarai bore witness to the storm of shot which had poured on his Column on the day of the assault. But it was when he walked on the Ridge that his recollections and emotions were most poignant. "I will not attempt to describe my feelings as I strolled over my old position on the Ridge," he writes. "When I looked on the ground round Hindu Rao's House, ploughed up with shot and shell, the rocks split and covered with bullet-marks, the trees cut in two and their branches torn, and the old House itself riddled through and through with shot and shell, fragments of which still lay on the ground though cart-loads had been removed, it appeared, I may say, a miracle, that I stood there, gazing on the scene. . . . When I looked at particular places in the Sabzi Mandi where I had seen my troops on the 13th of June driving the enemy before them, and again retreating under the burning sun, the deadly fire of musketry and artillery, and a vastly superior force, I exclaimed: 'Can it be—is it possible—am I really a living being, after all I have gone through?'"

Nor was the city itself in better plight. Ruined homes, their windows stuffed with sand-bags or furniture, their balconies and shutters hanging athwart; tottering walls, riddled and rent with shot and shell; battered bastions, encumbered with huge overturned siege-guns, which lay

"tossed about like playthings in a children's nursery"; the Church battered and bullet-pierced; the College wrecked and emptied, its library gone, its invaluable oriental manuscripts—the gifts of native gentlemen—either stolen by those who knew their value, or destroyed by those who were ignorant of it; the Palace, evidently hastily abandoned, still littered with a heterogeneous mass of things, tawdry, filthy, or splendid; the streets and courts and back premises lumbered with the heterogeneous débris of the Engineers' barricades, and the houses looted—gutted—not merely by amateurs like "Tommy Atkins," but by the Gurkhas, and those professional plunderers, the Sikhs—these things and the like gave the late capital of the Mughals the aspect of a city wrecked by demons of destruction.

And what of the dead? There was not a house in the place, scarcely a room, which did not harbour a festering corpse; the streets, the gardens, the dry canal-beds were full of them.

Lord Roberts has described the Chandni Chauk as it was when the Movable Column rode through it before sunrise on 25th September—while reverent hands were laying John Nicholson in his grave outside the walls. Dead and decomposing bodies, stiff in the sinister postures they had taken in their death-agony, lay in every direction—some seemed to beckon with uplifted hands, others slept; a dog gnawing a defenceless limb would turn a vicious eye on to the passers-by; vultures, too gorged to fly, flopped to places of safety, only to return when the trampling feet and dust had passed; horses neighed and trembled with terror, and men spoke low, as they pressed forward, eager to escape from the ghastly sights, the foul and sickly odours of this city of Dreadful Death. Overhead, meanwhile, spread the faint and unimaginably tender flush of dawn.

Passing sweet to the officers and all ranks of the Column

must have been the pure country air into which they marched; but to some of them, alas, it came too late—and of these was Alfred Wilde—for cholera was already in their midst. "I occupied the celebrated mosque, the Jama Masjid, with my Corps on the 20th September," he wrote to his sister, a month later, from Meerut. "The Band played 'God save the Queen,' to the delight of the soldiers and my own men! It was from this place that the fanatics had rushed out who murdered our unfortunate women and children. On that night I took off my clothes for the first time since the 14th—the day of assault—and took a sleep, fairly worn out, completely done!

On the 23rd, my Corps joined the Column of pursuit. On the first march out I lost four men of cholera, and on the second night I was seized myself. Fatigue and that horrible city of the dead had given the Corps the disease—in fact, the army got it. All my poor men who were seized, died, seven in all. A merciful Providence spared me. I suffered a great deal, and would have exchanged my lot for ten wounds! I was carried to Delhi, where I lay insensible for four days. When well enough, I came to Meerut, and have been improving ever since. I can walk about now, dear Jennie."

Taylor's fate, however, kept him in this place of horror for many a long week. He left it, his health severely tried, and scarcely able to ride, so troubled was he by boils and other ailments.

Too little is generally thought of the suffering of the natives of Delhi who were loyal to the British Flag during this crisis. It is well to recall the facts from their point of view. On the 11th of May, the peaceful city was invaded by native troops which had mutinied against their British masters. The respectable inhabitants, traders, and men of

peace, who had no fancy for dying in other men's quarrels, retired to their homes, put up their shutters, and awaited the arrival of the Sepoys' masters, men who had undertaken the maintenance of peace and order in the country . . . in vain ; the white men at Meerut—a place which was a negligible quantity, politically speaking, in comparison with Delhi—contented themselves with safeguarding the station. What could the better-class natives in the city, without organisation, troops, or the habit of command, do against the soldiery, armed and disciplined by the English, who had taken possession of their city and terrorised its inhabitants ?

The measures taken by the King were naïve and futile enough. The shops at the Delhi Gate having been seized by the mutineers and utilised by them as barracks, he sent for their Chief, "and threatened to take poison unless greater discipline were enforced, and the oppressions discontinued." He then issued an order "commanding the troops to leave the city, on the ground that they would only plunder and cause bloodshed" ; but not a soldier left. The rebels wanted food and money. . . . "The King, therefore, issued orders to seize all the bankers and wealthy men in the city, *particularly those favourable to the English*, and to extort money from them for the pay of the mutineers." "Jiwan Lal's garden and house were this day plundered by the soldiers on suspicion of his being in communication with the English," writes Nawab Hasan Khan, a rich and loyal native gentleman who was in Delhi throughout the siege. These, and similar entries in the diaries of other men of position who maintained their allegiance to England throughout the struggle, show that the loyalists in the city reposed on no bed of roses during the siege, bombardment, and assault ; on the contrary, they lay between the upper and lower millstones.

When, eventually, the British retook the place, no

measures were taken to protect the loyal natives who had already suffered so much; nor indeed were any such measures possible. "No man's life was safe," writes one of them—Mainuddin—"All able-bodied men were taken for rebels and shot"; and he gives a list of well-known loyalists who fell on the 14th, having been foolish enough to get caught "in the rush with which the English burst, like a pent-up river, through the city"; then another, of those who died on the gallows; and, finally, one of those who died in gaol. "In this way," he adds, "God showed His anger; the green as well as the dry trees were consumed; the guiltless shared the same fate as the guilty. . . . The slaughter of helpless, innocent women and children was avenged in a manner no one ever anticipated."[1]

All this was inevitable. Never, perhaps, had an army been more tempted to make reprisals. The guilty Sepoys had fled, and the guilty inmates of the Palace had either fled or were in our hands; there remained the residue of the population of the city, men of the offending colour. How were they to be treated? The blood of innocent women and children, of heroes and comrades, cried for vengeance. Memories took form when certain names were pronounced —Cawnpore, Lucknow, Agra, Allahabad, and Delhi—they stood like spectres between mercy and judgment, and seemed to make the former shameful. Many men "saw red," and cried for retribution: the city to be rased to the ground and its site ploughed and sown with salt; the Jama Masjid—the most dignified Moslem building in the world—to be destroyed; and the Palace—the fantastic offspring of the union of Italian art with that of the Orient—to be demolished. Delhi, like Jerusalem, Carthage, Alexandria, and Constantinople of old, was to be made an abomination of desolation.

[1] Metcalfe, *op. cit.*, 73.

These counsels would have prevailed, and this shame would have been England's, had there not been statesmen as well as soldiers in India. Prominent amongst these were four great men—John Nicholson, Neville Chamberlain, John Lawrence, and, above all, Lord Canning.

Nicholson, whom no one could accuse of sentimental statesmanship, occupied himself even before the siege with the difficult questions of the reorganisation of the native army, and the best manner of handling repentant mutineers. "I would not pardon a single Pandy in a regiment which had murdered its officers or committed any other atrocity," he wrote to John Lawrence. "I think, however, that there are Corps to which it would be neither just nor politic to refuse pardon . . . some regiments were positively the victims of circumstances and could not have held out any longer. We cannot, if we would, annihilate the whole force now in arms against us . . . and it is not wise, all things considered, to make every man desperate."

Neville Chamberlain raised his voice in stern reprobation of the counsels advocating wholesale destruction. "I am ready to pass sentence of death," he wrote, "against all rebels and mutineers against whom any single murder, or participation in any act of gross tyranny, can be proved, but I would sooner resign my commission than stand a passive spectator of indiscriminate slaughter."

John Lawrence went further; he not only spoke strongly against the long-continued reprisals to which the conquered city was subjected, but came down to Delhi and put an end to them, taking its civil administration into his own hands. When Colonel Pelham Burn—the military Governor of Delhi—consulted him on the advisability of destroying the Jama Masjid, he simply refused to consider such an act of vandalism, much less to consent to it. "Spare their holy places," Sir Henry Lawrence had said, and this was his

own generous instinct also. His policy was to proceed with severity against the ringleaders and royalties, to pursue and destroy the mutinous forces, but to let the masses alone; to encourage the peaceful commercial and industrial inhabitants of Delhi to return to their usual avocations, and thus, as soon as possible, to commence the reconstruction of local prosperity.

The military authorities considered John Lawrence's views optimistic; they feared that the bands of marauding mutineers who still pervaded the country-side might again attack the slightly defended city, and even, returning with the backward flowing population, attack its defences again from within.

Alex Taylor was, at first, of this number. The Project he drew up for the defence of the place was, in John Lawrence's opinion, on a much more extensive scale than necessary. The following letter was written to him on this subject. It opens with an outburst of warm approval:—"I have to congratulate you on your success at Delhi. I look on it that you and Nicholson, poor fellow, are the real captors of Delhi, particularly after Chamberlain was wounded. I think the world also gives you credit for the part you played. I have just been reading your memorandum as to the best mode of defending Delhi. Now I want to say a few words on this matter. It seems to me that General Wilson and you, on one side, and I on the other, desire two very different objects. The point seems to be which of the two is really desirable. If the object be to *defend* the town of Delhi, then you both are quite right. I have nothing further to say. But . . ." and then he goes on to express his disbelief in a further attack on the City by the mutineers; and eventually sketches the slight fortification which—in his opinion—would suffice to overawe its ruined inhabitants.[1]

[1] Bosworth Smith, *op. cit.*, ii. pp. 251–252.

His general views were put into execution : the people of Delhi returned to their battered homes, the broken threads of trade were re-knit, and the Palace was sufficiently armed to overawe a people who had just received a terrible lesson. This was not done, however, till he himself came down, and brought his powerful personality and common sense to bear on the difficult problems at hand.

The Chief Commissioner was joined soon after his arrival by his Secretary—Richard Temple—who often wandered with his Chief in the cool of the evening along the Ridge which the heroism of our troops had made holy ground. "Sir John," he says, "used to make the most honourable mention of Lieutenant Taylor of the Engineers for having set up, silently, in the dead of the night, and in the very teeth of the enemy, the Batteries which made the breaches whereby the city was stormed. He declared that Taylor was remarkable for skill, and as brave as a lion." [1]

Taylor's great civil Chief was generous in his appreciation of his subaltern's services. The words of congratulation directed to Taylor himself have been quoted already ; he wrote equally warmly of him to his late Chief, Lord Dalhousie. "We have indeed had a terrible time. Up to the capture of Delhi, the scales were trembling in the balance. The Panjabis of all classes have behaved admirably, and the zeal and the courage of the Panjab troops have far exceeded my hopes and expectations. Still, if Delhi had not fallen we must have been ruined. Had the troops retreated, all must have been lost. Had indeed the storming not succeeded all must have gone. To Nicholson, Alexander Taylor of the Engineers, and Neville Chamberlain, the real merit of our success is due. Chamberlain was severely wounded soon after his arrival

[1] Sir R. Temple, *Men and Events of My Time in India:* London, John Murray, 1882, p. 132.

at Delhi, and, until the actual storm, was in great measure laid on the shelf. But when our troops got inside, and Nicholson was mortally wounded, Chamberlain again came to the front, kept up the flagging spirits of our people, and directed the movements of the troops. John Nicholson, from the moment of his arrival, was the life and soul of the army. Before he went down he struck the only real blows which the mutineers received in the Panjab; he led the assault, and was the first man over the breach. Alexander Taylor, though only the Second Engineer before Delhi, was really the officer who designed and arranged all the scientific operations which led to the success of the assault, and, in the actual attack, was as forward as any man that day."[1]

John Lawrence's verdict had been previously voiced by Nicholson. It was enthusiastically shared by Taylor's brother-officers and fellow-workers. The young Engineer was popular in the Force. As the honours came out men looked for his name, and were surprised and disappointed not to find it on the lists. Sir Harry Lumsden wrote from Kandahar: "The honours are beginning to come out, but where are . . . ? Will England never learn to recognise the right men? Alex Taylor took Delhi, and some people we know"—the letter is written to Sir Herbert Edwardes—"saved the Panjab."[2] But Sir Harry, in his chivalrous ardour, was impatient; the honours came in due time.

"Taylor," writes Cave Browne, the historian of the mutiny in the Panjab, "though only a young subaltern, was recognised by all and felt by all to be the life, the moving spring, of the Engineering Department. It was sometimes thought that his services were not duly recognised, but no

[1] Bosworth Smith, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 286.
[2] Lady Edwardes, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 83.

sooner did he emerge from the chrysalis of a subaltern . . . than the well-won honours, which the rules of the service had hitherto forbidden, clustered round him, and he was made Lieutenant-Colonel and C.B."[1]

Sir Neville Chamberlain was among those who felt that official recognition of Taylor's services was meagre and slow in coming. Speaking of "Captain Taylor of the Engineers," he says: "From the day of his arrival in camp to the fall of the place, he was ever foremost and a host in himself. . . . We are more indebted to him for the result of the short siege than to any other individual. He is certainly alluded to in General Wilson's despatch, but who will ever know the services he rendered?"[2] Sir Neville refers to official recognition only. Alex Taylor always received the type of recognition for which he really cared—that of his comrades and fellow-workers—and this in full measure, pressed down and running over.

Henry Norman[3]—even then a marked man, and one whose position gave him exceptional insight into the inner working of the upper strata of the military life of the camp—in his official account of the siege, makes the following quotation from a letter signed "Felix," which had already appeared in the *Pioneer Mail.* "For the complete success that attended the prosecution of the siege, the chief credit is undoubtedly due to Colonel Baird Smith, the Chief Engineer, and to Captain Alex Taylor, the Director of the attack. On this latter officer, in fact—in consequence of the Chief Engineer being wounded—devolved the entire superintendence of the siege-works, and his energy and activity will doubtless meet their due reward. Throughout

[1] Cave Browne, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 170.

[2] Forrest, *op. cit.* (*Sir N. Chamberlain*), p. 348.

[3] The late General Sir Henry Norman, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Governor of Queensland.

the operations he seemed omnipresent, and to bear a charmed life, for he escaped without a wound. The Plan of Attack was bold and skilful, the nature of the enemy we were contending with was exactly appreciated, and our plan shaped accordingly. Pandy can fight well behind cover, but he was outmanœuvred, his attention being diverted from the real point of attack till the last; and then the cover, which might have proved such a serious obstacle to us, was seized at the right moment, without loss, and all its advantages turned against him. With plenty of skilled workmen the siege-works might have been more speedily erected, but, with the wretched means at our disposal, the wonder is that so much was done with so little loss."[1]

Contemporary tributes to the value of his work are too many to quote. They are resumed by Sir William Russell, the *Times* correspondent, who was in contact with the chief actors in the scenes he described so vividly, and who summarised the best evidence he was able to collect on this point in the following words: "The officer who planned the assault—under the general superintendence of Colonel Baird Smith—was Captain Taylor, Bengal Engineers, who has been severely wounded in the present siege. I have never seen Colonel Baird Smith in my life, nor have I spoken a word to Captain Taylor on this subject, but I have the strongest reasons for believing that this statement is correct."[2]

Nor has the lapse of time effaced the recollection of the value and quality of Taylor's work at Delhi, or—within certain limits—of its independence. Piles of letters lie before me; they bear the date 1911, and such honoured

[1] *A Narrative of the Campaign of the Delhi Army*, by Major H. W. Norman, Adjutant-General of the Bengal Army, published 1858, p. 40.

[2] *Times*, 6th May 1858: written at Lucknow.

signatures as those of General Sir John Watson, General Sir Dighton Probyn, General Sir Fred Maunsell, Major General Thomason, Colonel Lang, and others—all of them Alex Taylor's comrades at Delhi. Their writers bear eloquent testimony to the permanence of their impressions of the supreme importance of Taylor's work at Delhi.

A few words from one of these, to which the official relation of the author to Alex Taylor in 1857 lends exceptional weight, should be quoted here. They are taken from a private letter from General Sir Fred Maunsell, the Commandant of the Sappers at Delhi, in 1857, and the Director of the Right Attack throughout the whole of the operations against the city. Sir Frederick Maunsell writes: "I believe, nay, am sure, that it could be truthfully said that without General Wilson and Colonel Baird Smith, Delhi would surely have fallen as it did, but that without Alex Taylor our position would have been most serious, and the difficulties such, that it might not have been successfully assaulted without strong reinforcements of British troops and siege materials. It is certain that even Nicholson's magnetic and determined leading could not have been effectual had it not been backed by Taylor's scientific knowledge, daring reconnaissances, and resolution.

I was one of the senior Engineers at Delhi, and I can frankly state that none of us were capable of doing what Taylor did. We all doubtless thought ourselves fine fellows, more or less, but as to rising to a mastery or control of the difficulties involved, we were nowhere as compared with him. . . His was the mind that conceived the Plan of Attack, and his the mind and body that carried it to a successful conclusion. A master of engineering detail, civil and military, and cognisant of the means available in artillery and soldiers, untiring in bodily energy, and unsparing of himself, he was everywhere, fixed and saw to the execution of every detail

himself. Certainly to him must be attributed the fall of Delhi in the short time necessary to success. He was, in fact, the hero of the siege, and the common saying, 'Taylor took Delhi,' is perfectly true.

I say this with no reflection on the Engineer-in-Chief, who, being sick and suffering, rightly entrusted the defence and attack to his Second-in-Command, being perfectly sure of his unfailing ability. Baird Smith filled his place beside the General-in-Command most suitably. He had a diplomatist's duty to perform, to the success of which his knowledge of India and his exceptional powers of speech and pen contributed immensely; had he not been supported, however, by a man of Taylor's physical and mental energy, these would have been of little use."

CHAPTER XIV

THE SOUTHERN AREA OF REBELLION
(BENGAL, THE NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES, AND OUDH)

At about the same time that the Palace of the Mughals fell into British hands, two significant revolts occurred in the Panjab: a couple of unimportant hill-tribes dared to attack the station of Murree; and the cattle-grazing peasants of the neighbourhood of Multan broke into guerilla warfare on an extensive scale. These revolts, unconnected with military disaffection, threw a sinister light on the depth to which British prestige had ebbed in Northern India. The news of the capture of Delhi, however, and the sight of returning local levies, accompanied by long trains of camels and carts laden with plunder, revived popular faith in the *ikbal* of the white man.

The fall of the capital of the Mughals—though undoubtedly the salvation of the Panjab—was, in the first instance, but a doubtful boon to more Southerly garrisons; its immediate result being the reinforcement of their enemies by the sudden liberation of thousands of Sepoys. It intensified the struggle in force in the Doab, Oudh, Rohilkhand, and Central India, which was no mere mutiny—as in the Panjab—but an armed rebellion, in which our own trained mercenaries, fighting against us without hope of pardon, were merely the chief weapon used by their natural

leaders—our astute political adversaries, the King of Oudh, the Raja of Bithur (Nana Sahib), the Rani of Jhansi, and others, who, breaking into open rebellion, gave our mutineers cohesion, leading, and something immediately tangible for which to strike.

It would be well, perhaps, if the reader—in order to realise the supreme importance of the fall of Delhi, and the rôle played by its captors in the subsequent campaign—would here take a bird's-eye view of the cataclysm of 1857, as it appeared to Lord Canning, and of the manner in which he dealt with it.

It had been known for years that the native army was agitated by an undercurrent of mutinous disaffection, and that discontent—religious and political—existed in Bengal, the North-West Provinces, Oudh, and even in the Panjab. Incendiary fires in the Sepoy lines were symptoms common to Barrackpore, a few miles from Calcutta; to Ambala, a thousand miles distant; to Peshawar, on the borders of Afghanistan; and to hundreds of intervening stations. The disquieting chupatti and marked tree appeared alike on the banks of the Ganges, the Jumna, the Gumti, and on the five rivers of the Panjab. It was clear, therefore, that the whole of the Sepoy army was tainted—how deeply, no one suspected.

Mutinies connected with the introduction of the new cartridge, and caused by native distrust of the British attitude towards caste, had occurred in January and February in the great military stations near Calcutta—Dum Dum, Barrackpore, Berhampore—and had been dealt with locally. Although danger-signals were plentiful, general opinion was optimistic.

This optimism was rudely shaken by the events of the 10th and 11th of May.

When Lord Canning learned that military incompetence at Meerut had allowed a local mutiny to grow into political rebellion in the capital of Muhammadan India, his anxious thoughts were bent, chiefly, not on the recently annexed 133,000 square miles lying between the Sutlej and Afghanistan, which were administered by John Lawrence and fairly garrisoned with white troops—the Panjab being designed to serve as a buffer between India and Northern invasion—but on the 300,000 square miles lying between Calcutta and Delhi, Central India, and Nepal, which were administered under less masterful guidance by small isolated groups of civilians, and garrisoned by an army in which the native regiments stood to the Queen's regiments in a ratio of 15 to 1.

It was obvious that the revolt of the capital of the Mughals had struck a note which must vibrate sympathetically through the great centres of native life strung loosely along the thousand miles of military road connecting Delhi with Calcutta; a road, more than half the length of which was defended in May by one British regiment only—incredible to relate—H.M. 10th, of which Dinapore was the headquarters. Agra, however, some fifty miles from the highway, was garrisoned by the 3rd Europeans.

A glance at the map[1] will show how tremendous were the sources of danger with which this highway was beset, and how precarious was British tenure of this its main line of communications with the North.

At some distance from the road, and 377 miles from Calcutta by river, the great buildings of Muhammadan Patna mirrored themselves in the Ganges. Its 158,000 inhabitants[2]—a number swelled by some 100,000 pilgrims during the Muharram—were held in check by three regiments of Native Infantry, one Company of European Artillery, one

[1] See Map facing p. 106. [2] In 1857.

of Native Artillery, and by the headquarters of H.M. 10th Foot, stationed, as said, at Dinapore, some ten miles distant.

The Grand Trunk Road, running obliquely North-Westward from Calcutta, strikes the Ganges first near Benares, at a distance of some four hundred miles from the capital, and some 150—by river—from Patna. Benares, the religious capital of Hindu India, and the site of some 1454 temples and 272 mosques, contained a fixed population variously computed at 200,000 to 300,000 souls, an immense floating population of religious pilgrims, and the varying households of several great state-prisoners, Sikh, Hindu, and Muhammadan—among whom, in 1857, seditious members of the imperial House of Delhi were prominent. This hot-bed of fanaticism—both religious and political—was administered by a handful of white civilians, and garrisoned by half a company of British Artillery[1] and otherwise by *native troops only*—2000 infantry-men.

Seventy miles further North, the great Mughal fortress of Allahabad, second in importance in India to Delhi only, overlooks the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna, and commands the roadways and waterways to Cawnpore and Agra on the North, and to Calcutta on the South. It is associated with a city, then containing some 100,000 souls, and an immense concourse of religious pilgrims who come to bathe in its doubly sacred waters. With incredible folly, this all-important strategic position was then entrusted to *native troops* only. At the end of May, however, sixty invalid British Artillerymen were housed in the fort.

One hundred and thirty miles further up the Ganges, and six hundred and twenty-eight miles by road from Calcutta, lies Cawnpore, once a great frontier outpost, but

[1] Commanded by Captain William Olpherts—"Hell-fire Dick"—afterwards General Sir William Olpherts, V.C., K.C.B.

in 1857 a mean straggling commercial town, with great wharfs and ghats on the river, and some 60,000 inhabitants. With the annexation of Oudh it had recovered something of its former strategic importance, for it not only commanded the highways to Rohilkhand and Delhi, but the bridge of boats connecting the highway with the road to Lucknow. Its cantonments in May held three regiments of Native Infantry and one of Native Cavalry, 3000 men in all; *not a single British regiment*, but detachments from three British regiments and fifty-nine men of the Company's Artillery—300 men in all. This force was commanded by a fine soldier of Indian experience, General Sir Hugh Wheeler.

Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, a city of about 700,000 inhabitants, lay at a distance of some forty-two miles from Cawnpore, and was the scene of Sir Henry Lawrence's beneficent attempts to gain the confidence of a turbulent people whose confidence in British rule had been shaken by recent misgovernment. The entire force at Sir Henry's disposal in May consisted of 7000 *native soldiers* of more than doubtful loyalty, and 750 Englishmen. Every other station in Oudh was garrisoned by native troops exclusively. The Chief Commissioner's position was perilous in the extreme; his native troops had shown signs of disaffection in February, and had blazed into open mutiny on the 3rd May; the dependents of the court, the landed aristocracy, the retired soldiery, and even the trading classes, were passionately averse to British rule. If his base, Cawnpore, were lost, he and his 750 Europeans would be isolated, and their fate—humanly speaking—inevitable.

Near Cawnpore was Bithur, the seat of the Nana Sahib, the adopted son of the ex-Peshwa. The sinister significance of this fact was not appreciated in May.

Some eight hundred miles from Calcutta, and a hundred and fifty from Delhi, not on the Grand Trunk Road, but

connected with it by good roads, and not on the Ganges, but on the right bank of the Jumna, rises the great red sandstone Fort of Agra. A mile and a half in circuit, and enclosed by a wall seventy feet high which encircles a palace of unrivalled loveliness, it overlooks the river, and a city, containing (in 1857) 140,000 souls and two of the most beautiful buildings in the world—the Jama Masjid and the Taj Mahal. Agra was held in May by one British regiment —the 3rd Europeans—two regiments of Native Infantry, and one battery of Bengal Artillery. Its neighbouring stations were garrisoned by *native troops.*

Some thirty miles further North, the temples and ghats of Muttra—the alleged birthplace of Krishna—crowd in picturesque confusion to the river's edge, while tier upon tier, on the rising ground behind them, lie the level lines of its myriad roofs. This shrine of Hinduism commands the roadway and the waterway to Delhi, and was a point at which it should have been possible to offer determined resistance to Southern mutineers *en route* for Delhi; it was held in 1857, however, by three Companies of a *native* regiment.

A chart showing the then distribution of troops along the Grand Trunk Road must have been a disquieting document in 1857.

Lord Canning was well aware that, unless Delhi were speedily recaptured, a spark of rebellion would run down this undefended highway and set the whole country ablaze. Lack of soldiers and the distance which separated him from the rebel stronghold made it impossible that his should be the hand which retook the city. This, he felt, must be the work of the Commander-in-Chief, General Anson, then at Simla, of the large body of British troops at Meerut, and last, but not least, of John Lawrence. To Anson and Lawrence he wrote frequently in May and June, urging an

immediate attack on Delhi, and, on its fall—which he then expected would occur from day to day—the speedy dispatch of a Movable Column, commissioned to occupy the strong places on the road from Delhi to Cawnpore, to strengthen the garrison at Cawnpore, and, if possible, that of Lucknow also, pending the arrival of reinforcements on a large scale from Calcutta.

Meanwhile, he laboured to collect these reinforcements; he requisitioned troops from all sides—from Burma, Madras, Ceylon, Bombay, and from further afield; sent for the victorious troops then returning from Persia; waylaid those under Lord Elgin and General Ashburnham *en route* for China; and wrote to England—7900 miles distant; alas! no submarine cables, and steam-navigation in its infancy—to beg for white troops in sufficient numbers to deal with the mutiny of his Sepoy army, 257,000 strong, and the revolt of the greater part of his Presidency. But above all, he cast about him for leaders of tried ability. He telegraphed for Havelock and Outram, then on their way from Persia; begged Sir Patrick Grant, the Commander-in-Chief at Madras, to assist him at Calcutta with the work of organisation, and asked the Home Government to put this soldier of unrivalled Indian experience in chief command of the coming campaign.[1]

It being obviously of the first importance to secure the road, Lord Canning determined to dispatch troops Northward in small detachments as soon as they arrived. Led by able Commanders, their duty would be to secure a lengthening line of reliable posts, to raise and organise means of transport, to protect and forward each overlapping wave of white fighting-men that rolled Northward, and thus, eventually, to command the whole line of communication

[1] Sir Colin Campbell, who had recently returned to England from the Crimea, was, however, sent instead.

from Calcutta to Delhi. This programme meant a series of supersessions; for it would always be senior and more senior officers who would come up with gradually larger and larger bodies of reinforcements, and would go forward, leaving their juniors to hold the base. This was deplorable, but inevitable. Unfortunately, the means of transport at first available were miserably inadequate. Entrainment was possible for 120 miles only; there was then horse-carriage for twenty men a day—no more,—and bullock-carriage for a hundred. This was little, but it was a beginning; it was felt that the moral effect of the recurrent sight of white soldiers moving up-country would be good, and that the thirty British artillerymen at Benares would be glad of a regularly pulsing reinforcement of twenty, and then of 120 white men a day.

The first clause of the Governor-General's requisitions met with rapid response. On the 23rd of May the 1st Madras Fusiliers under Colonel Neill arrived from Madras, and were soon followed by H.M. 64th, 35th, and 78th Highlanders from Persia. Troops continued to arrive in larger and larger bodies during the following months. On the 17th of June Sir Patrick Grant landed in Calcutta, together with General Havelock. July, however, had burnt itself out before General Outram had arrived, and it was mid-August before the ship with Sir Colin Campbell on board—the forerunner of a fleet of English troop-ships—sailed up the Hooghly.

Long ere this—four weeks, indeed, after the outbreak at Meerut—all that remained of British rule in the vast tract of country lying between that city and Allahabad were the three garrisons, heavily weighted with women and children, beleaguered in Agra, Cawnpore, and Lucknow—the last two sorely pressed.

Before May was out, Colonel Neill had posted in hot

haste with a handful—fifty only—of his war-seasoned Madras Fusiliers to the relief of the white-faces at Benares. Mutinies accompanied by murder, arson, and robbery having occurred in dependent stations, and his arrival coinciding with that of a detachment of 150 men and three officers of the H.M. 10th from Dinapore, the disarmament of the Sepoys (2000 men by 250) was decided on, and accomplished—not, however, without deplorable bloodshed.[1] Excitement and rebellion spread in the streets, but, thanks to Neill's energy, determination, and remorseless severity, that great centre of superstition and sedition was dominated.

He was then able to hurry Northward by forced marches, through country ravaged by rebellion and anarchy, to Allahabad, where—on 4th June—the Sepoys had mutinied, murdered their officers, possessed themselves of the guns in the cantonments, and, fraternising with the fanatical population, had freed the gaol-birds, sacked the treasury,[2] destroyed the telegraphic and railway-plant,[3] massacred all the Europeans and Christians they could find, adding to death every aggravation cruelty could suggest. They had invested the fort, and, led by a celebrated Maulvi, had proclaimed the Emperor of Delhi. Within the fort itself confusion reigned; its Sepoy garrison had been disarmed and ejected; its Sikh guard, however—completely out of hand—went in and out of the gates for purposes of plunder, brought consignments of wine and spirits into the fortress, and inaugurated a saturnalia of intoxication. Colonel Neill arrived on 11th June, seized the fort, re-established discipline, bombarded and burned part of the town, proclaimed martial law, and instituted such bloody reprisals that the town lapsed into the quietude of terror.

Having secured Allahabad, Neill prepared to press on to

[1] 4th June. [2] Which then contained £300,000.
[3] Battering the railway-engines—fire-devils—with cannon.

Cawnpore, where Sir Hugh Wheeler, with three hundred British combatants and 380 women and children,[1] was invested by 3000 Sepoys provided with abundant heavy artillery and ammunition and reinforced by an unknown number of the adherents of the Nana Sahib, led by Tantia Topi.[2] This garrison—cooped up in pitiably weak entrenchments two hundred yards square, and exposed both to the enemy's fire and to the rays of a sun which so heated the guns that they blistered the hands that touched them—was obviously in sore need of help. Most men in Neill's position would, however, have considered themselves at the end of their tether. Not only was his Force too small to divide with safety—and it would have been impolitic under the circumstances to leave the Allahabad fort anything but strongly garrisoned—but it was decimated by sickness; worn out by heat, toil, fatigue, privations, and occasional excesses, his men fell an easy prey to the ravages of cholera, their sufferings being unmitigated by *any* medical aid; while he himself was so weakened by sunstroke and over-fatigue that he had to be carried in a litter to the Batteries he directed.

The desperate condition of Sir Hugh Wheeler's force cried, however, for *immediate* assistance, and he exerted himself to the uttermost to collect a body of men to send to his support. Lack of transport again proved an almost insuperable obstacle. Sixteen hundred transport-bullocks had disappeared from Allahabad during the days of mutiny and rebellion, and their absence made it difficult to move men and baggage under the pitiless sun of June. He was eventually able, nevertheless, to send four hundred Europeans, four hundred natives, and two guns under Major Renaud of

[1] The women and children of H.M. 32nd at Lucknow, of the officers of the four Sepoy regiments which had mutinied, and of the Cawnpore civil officials, merchants, traders, Eurasians, etc.

[2] Since the 6th June.

his own regiment, Northward on the last day of June. On the evening of the same day General Havelock arrived; and the command of the Column destined to relieve Cawnpore and Lucknow passed away from the officer who had directed its first movements so ably, but who nevertheless was destined to die at Lucknow; as, indeed, was the officer by whom he was superseded.

General Havelock had arrived at Calcutta on 17th June, and left on 25th June at the head of some 1200 men[1] and a distinguished Staff of officers, men of brilliant promise, amongst whom his young Adjutant-General, Captain Stuart Beatson, was conspicuous.[2] Knowing the desperate straits of the garrison at Cawnpore, he had pushed through Benares, and, pressing on, in spite of the great heat, reached Allahabad four days after his departure from the capital, only to hear of the capitulation of the Cawnpore garrison on promise of safe conduct to Allahabad, and of its treacherous massacre at the ghat, on 27th June.

These tragic tidings modified his tactics. Renaud had been dispatched either to co-operate with Sir Hugh Wheeler, or to engage part of the Force attacking his entrenchments. The whole of this hostile Force, however, had been liberated by the annihilation of the British garrison, and, unless Renaud were careful, the advance Column he commanded might well be engulfed. This knowledge, and the report that some two hundred women and children were still in the Nana's hands, gave a further stimulus to Havelock's passionate desire to push on. Once again, however, equipage was lacking. But at last, on 7th July, he was able to launch himself at the head of 1400 men to the reinforcement of

[1] Among them the 78th Highlanders, whose bearded faces, kilts, and disciplined courage made a great impression on the minds of the natives of the districts through which they passed.

[2] Father of the present Major-General Sir Stuart Beatson, K.C.S.I., C.B., and brother-in-law to the present Field-Marshal Sir Charles Brownlow.

Renaud, the rescue of the women and children at Cawnpore, the re-occupation of that station—the strategic base for Lucknow—and, finally, to the relief of the Lucknow Residency, which had then been besieged since the 29th June.

Rain, falling in torrents as he started, converted sun-burnt clay into morass, and many of his men fell out *en route*—tired, footsore, and stricken with cholera—but he pressed resolutely forward. Towards midnight on the 11th, Renaud's men heard the pipers skirling "The Campbells are coming," and presently their camp rang with the cheers with which they welcomed Havelock's Column.[1]

The junction of the Forces was opportune, for a few hours later the Cawnpore mutineers, led by one of the Nana's Generals and the Maulvi of Allahabad, attacked what they believed to be Renaud's Force only. They were opposed, however, by the combined Force led by a General with whom military tactics had been a passion from his boyhood, and who had prayed for years that it might be given him to lead a victorious army in the field. This prayer was granted him that day. By the able disposition of admirably-served Artillery and of the long-ranged Enfield rifle, he routed the enemy—3000 strong—took eleven guns, and drove the mutineers and rebels back step by step, through suburbs and gardens, into Fatehgarh; and this with the loss of twelve British soldiers from sunstroke, but not one from the sword of the enemy (12th July). The city—stained by recent mutiny and massacre—was sacked.

Three days later (15th July) Havelock defeated the enemy again at Aong, and again, *on the same day*, at Pandu River, wresting the bridge—unsuccessfully mined—from the grip of a large body of mutineers; its loss would have meant considerable delay. Cawnpore was almost in sight, but night was falling, and the soldiery, worn by heat and

[1] 11th July.

exertion, having fought since dawn in a temperature of 112° F. in the shade, flung themselves on to the ground, and, too exhausted to eat, tossed through a night of intolerable heat. The moon was still shining when they rose, and—under the cover of a feigned attack—took the enemy in flank. The heat of the day[1] was frightful: man after man, reeling from the ranks, fell to earth smitten by the sun; but, dogged and determined, the Force, skilfully opposed by the Nana, fought gallantly on, and at dawn next day[2] possessed itself of Cawnpore.[3]

Too late, alas! Impotent, and trembling with horror, Englishmen and Highlanders stood with blood-shot eyes and grey lips beside a well filled with the naked white bodies of women and children, or stood—dazed—in a little room the walls and posts of which were splashed with blood and marked with the dents of bullets and of butchers' knives, while books and toys lay in the red patches with which its floor was inlaid. The vows of vengeance then registered were never forgotten.

Havelock's halt at Cawnpore was short. The determined struggle at Delhi showed no signs of approaching its end; Agra was besieged; the defenders of the Lucknow Residency,

[1] 15th July. [2] 17th July.

[3] Striking among the events of a day crowded with dramatic moments, were two incidents—first, the death of Captain Stuart Beatson, who, stricken with cholera and too ill to ride, had himself carried into action on a tumbril, and passed away with the cheers of a victorious army ringing in his ears—"poor little Cora," Henry Brownlow might well write in his diary (see *ante*, i. p. 292); and second, the manner in which a certain Battery of heavy guns was taken by the Highlanders. A group of hostile guns was holding its own, when the enemy's band behind it struck up the tune of "Cheer boys, cheer"; the faces of the Highlanders stiffened, and they advanced like a living wall on that belching Battery; then came the skirling of pipes, a yell, and a rush of kilted men with fixed bayonets, and presently the guns were in the hands of the Highlanders and the strains of a pibroch had replaced the air of "Cheer boys, cheer."

worn by incessant attacks, were steadily exhausting their provisions, and, unless soon relieved, would be overwhelmed—and then the monstrous tragedies of Cawnpore might well be repeated.

Urged by these facts, three days subsequent to the taking of Cawnpore—having destroyed the Nana's deserted palace at Bithur, and captured his guns; having moved the British camp into a position commanding the bridge of boats, which the Engineers were throwing across the river in the teeth of exceptional difficulties; and having put Neill in command of the station—Havelock led the heroes of the long march from Allahabad and of four successful battles across the river. The undertaking was one of the most hazardous ever attempted by mortal man—the rescue, by 1400 men, of a garrison encumbered by five hundred non-combatants, blockaded within a town of some 700,000 martial inhabitants reinforced by thousands of trained mutineers, and separated from the relieving Force by forty-two miles of swamp and jhil, intersected by rivers and canals, and dotted with armed villages. The rescuers were threatened, moreover, on both flank and rear, by bodies of from 5000 to 20,000 men, and depended on an exceedingly weak base; for, in order to get together the 1400 men with whom he marched, Havelock had been obliged to reduce Neill's garrison at Cawnpore—entrusted with the defence of the cantonments and of the passage of the river—to two hundred men, most of them either sick or wounded, and to cut down that of Allahabad to 358 men. He hoped, however, that both these garrisons and his own army would soon be strengthened by reinforcements from Calcutta.

The task Havelock had set himself was out of all proportion to his strength. He left Cawnpore on the day subsequent to the arrival of General Neill, but so inadequate were his means of transport that it took him

four days to get his troops across the Ganges, then in high flood, and a week passed before he reached the comparatively high ground near Mangalwar on which he pitched his camp. From this strong position he advanced three times towards Lucknow, captured the same positions three times, and three times was forced to fall back in order to defend both his reinforcements and his camp from the large bodies of the enemy which threatened them and his base; and finally—to his bitter disappointment—was obliged to fall back on Cawnpore by the health of his troops, who, ill-fed, unsheltered from the driving rain and burning sun, were ravaged by cholera and dysentery, and also because of ill tidings which reached him from the further side of the river. He learned that 4000 Sepoys were marching from Bithur—the Nana's capital—against Cawnpore, that the Gwalior Contingent, the finest body of troops of all arms in India, had mutinied, and were collecting at Kalpi for the same purpose; and that, in consequence of the mutiny of three regiments at Dinapore, the promised reinforcements from Calcutta would not be at his disposal for two months.

His efforts, however, had not been fruitless. His presence in Oudh had diverted the attention of large bodies of rebels from Cawnpore and Lucknow; while his victories—won against tremendous odds—had revived British prestige. Before he left Oudh he dealt his opponents another heavy blow (12th August), under the elation of which he led his sick and battered men back into Cawnpore (13th August). Not to rest there, however; a few days later he took them for an eight-hours' march in the burning sun to Bithur, there to encounter the 4000 mutineers led by the redoubtable Tantia Topi, who had for some time been threatening Cawnpore. Having converted a desperate struggle into a hard-won victory—the ninth in a campaign

inaugurated little more than a month previously[1]—he returned to Cawnpore.

On his re-entry into the station on the evening of his victory, a copy of the *Government Gazette* was put into his hands. It contained, not words of praise and gratitude, but the curt announcement of his supersession. Accepting the injustice as an act of divine discipline—"whom He loveth He correcteth"—he bent all his energies on the collection of materials, military equipment, bridge-boats, carriage, etc., which would facilitate the movements of his successor. That successor, however—General Outram, the "Bayard of India"—had already determined not to deprive his comrade of the glory of achieving that for which he had striven so heroically, and on his arrival at Cawnpore a month later—on the 15th September—issued a General Order in which he stated that, moved by admiration for General Havelock's strenuous and noble efforts to relieve Lucknow, he had resolved to temporarily waive his rank, and "to accompany the Force to Lucknow in his civil capacity of Chief Commissioner of Oudh, tendering his military services to General Havelock as a volunteer."

Such an act of chivalrous self-abnegation sheds a purer lustre on the race to which its performer belongs than could the glory of any material success.

While General Havelock and his inadequate Force—now advancing, now forced to fall back, lest they should lose touch with their base, soaked by rain, struck down by the sun, impeded by swamps and floods, opposed by a strongly posted and multitudinous foe, and decimated by cholera and dysentery—were striving their utmost to relieve Lucknow, the third wave of the British reinforcements was rolling Northward.

[1] 12th July.

General James Outram, fresh from his Persian victories, arrived in Calcutta on the 1st August. The aspect of things at that moment was sinister. Delhi had not fallen, and General Wilson held out no hope of its capture until his numbers were considerably reinforced. The garrison at Cawnpore had been wiped out. Should a similar fate befall the defenders of the Lucknow Residency, the mutineers at Delhi would receive such an immense accession to their strength that it might be necessary to raise the siege, on which disaster the revolt of the Panjab would undoubtedly follow, and, possibly, an Afghan invasion. British rule in Bengal, from Calcutta to Peshawar, would then be suspended, and in such a contingency, who would answer for the loyalty of the other Presidencies? Clearly it was of the first importance to press troops up to Cawnpore immediately, and at the utmost speed.

This course, unfortunately, was impeded by the mutiny of three Sepoy regiments at Dinapore, followed by the celebrated siege of the "little house" at Arrah, and a serious rebellion in Bihar. Thanks, however, to the genius and energy of Major Vincent Eyre, these difficulties were overcome, and General Outram was able to leave Calcutta on 6th August at the head of a small Column consisting at the outset of H.M. 5th Fusiliers, newly arrived from the Mauritius, H.M. 90th Light Infantry and some guns. He travelled by the river-route in order to save his unacclimatised troops; rearranged, removed, and consolidated the detachments left along the line by Havelock; and organised arrangements for expediting the future progress of Sir Colin Campbell's great army, which would eventually move up behind him. Colonel Robert Napier travelled with him as Chief of his Staff and head of the Adjutant-General's Department. The ties of mutual professional esteem and personal friend-

ship then formed between these two men of military genius[1] were severed only by death.

On 15th September Outram arrived at Cawnpore, where he was warmly welcomed by the General who had seconded him so admirably in Persia. On the following day he issued the order in which he temporarily renounced his rank for the noble reason already given. The Engineers then threw a bridge of boats across the flooded Ganges, a difficult operation—under the circumstances—completed in three days, and on the 19th Havelock's army, 3180 strong, moving into Oudh, marched with but little opposition as far as the Alambagh, a fortified palace and garden enclosed in high walls, some three miles from Lucknow. At sunset on the 25th September the Force launched itself, finally, to the relief of the Residency, advancing, not through streets of loopholed houses, as the enemy had expected, but by a comparatively sheltered though circuitous route, until it reached the Kaisarbagh (King's Garden), the scene of a bloody encounter. It struggled on from this point, advancing now, however, through streets "every house in which was a fortress," as Havelock said, and at nightfall succeeded in entering the Residency, amidst the cheers of the heroic garrison with its 450 women and children. The latter—not having seen the well at Cawnpore—wondered at the intensity of the emotion which unmanned their glad and weary deliverers. The price paid for their safety had been heavy. Foremost amongst the lamented dead who fell that day was the gallant Neill.

Sir James Outram's generous purpose was realised. Havelock had relieved Lucknow.

Strange and sad to the late Chief Commissioner must have been the aspect of the broken, shot-riddled house in

[1] When Outram was asked in after years who was the best soldier he had ever known, he replied without hesitation: "Robert Napier."

which he and Lady Outram had so lately kept open house, and in which his successor—Sir Henry Lawrence—had died. It must have been with pride, however, that he learned the intimate history of its siege from the lips of one of its ablest defenders, John Anderson, R.E., brother of Lady Outram and of the young Political whose murder at Multan had brought about the Second Sikh War.[1]

Havelock's army had succeeded in forcing its way into the Residency; the hosts of the enemy, however, closed up behind it, like water in the wake of a diver, and it soon became evident that it had succeeded in *reinforcing* the garrison, but *not* in *relieving* it, for by this time the number of the sick and wounded, women and children, in the Residency had risen to a thousand, and it was clear that the task of escorting so large a body of non-combatants safely through the city was beyond its strength. Outram, therefore—who had now assumed command—had no choice but to remain on the defensive within the Residency, until relieved in his turn by Sir Colin Campbell in November. Fortunately, the provisions stored by Sir Henry Lawrence proved to be in far greater quantities than had been supposed, and it was found that with strict economy the enlarged garrison could be fed for some weeks.

The Force devoted itself throughout this second siege to strengthening its position, to repelling attacks, and to mining and counter-mining. This programme admitted of many golden soldiers' opportunities, which—as may be readily imagined—were not allowed to pass unheeded. Conspicuous among the brave, and pre-eminent among the able, during this phase of the struggle, was Robert Napier, to whose careful and scientific dispositions many a hard-won success was due. By none was this more generously recognised than by his Chief. At a dinner

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. pp. 61–63.

given in General Outram's honour a little more than a year later, the hero of the occasion publicly declared—"I have received much credit for the defence of Lucknow. This credit is really due to my friend, the Chief of my Staff, Sir Robert Napier. When my heart was low, when everything was dark, and I could see no daylight at Lucknow, he was always beside me, and his wisdom and capacity gave me encouragement, and—success."[1] Such magnanimous recognition of the merits of a subordinate officer gilds the laurels of one in high command.

Meanwhile, Sir Colin Campbell had arrived in Calcutta on the 13th August—the day on which Havelock, abandoning all hope of relieving Lucknow, fell back on Cawnpore, and a week after Sir James Outram had left the capital of Bengal. Assisted by Lord Canning and Sir Patrick Grant, the new Commander-in-Chief devoted himself to the elaboration of a plan of campaign, by which—in co-operation with the armies of Madras and Bombay—he proposed not only to eradicate military rebellion in the vast reaches of country lying between Calcutta and the Southern boundaries of the Panjab and stretching from Central India to Nepal, but to re-establish normal civil administration. The field of the main campaign, the command of which he reserved to himself, was Oudh and the North-West Provinces, an area of 100,000 square miles, and containing a population of some 38,000,000 souls.

He also bent his energy on the centralisation of his Force, scattered in small detachments along or near the roadways and river-ways connecting Calcutta with Cawnpore, and on stimulating the preparation of the equipments, carriage, etc., necessary to the concentration of his army in the Doab. The latter was no easy task, for the Bengal army depended largely for ammunition on Delhi, for gun-carriages on

[1] Private letter from General Sir Martin Dillon, G.C.B., C.S.I.

Fatehgarh, for saddlery on Cawnpore—all of which stations were then in the hands of the mutineers. The general hostility of the country-people, moreover, made it most difficult to procure transport; while the distances to be covered were immense, the road from Calcutta to Cawnpore—along which the troops, with materials and impedimenta, moved in bullock-carts—slowly, therefore—being[1] 628 miles in length, and open throughout its course to the attacks of hordes of rebels, of the Dinapore mutineers, and—in the neighbourhood of Allahabad and Cawnpore—of detachments of the Gwalior Contingent. The 350 miles of high-road connecting Delhi and Cawnpore were, moreover, entirely lost to British use, communications between Delhi and Calcutta travelling *via* Bombay.

While Sir Colin was thus occupied, Delhi was captured[2] and Lucknow reinforced,[3] the latter, at the price of the temporary loss to the army of General Havelock, General Outram and some 1500 men, who—together with Colonel Inglis and his garrison— were blockaded in the Residency.

No sooner was Delhi in British hands than a Flying Column under Brigadier Greathed was dispatched Southward with orders to clear the Doab, re-possess itself of the Grand Trunk Road, and finally to join Sir Colin Campbell's future headquarters at Cawnpore. It arrived at that station on the 26th October, a welcome accession to a Force which, prior to its arrival, had been woefully deficient in cavalry and field artillery.

Sir Colin left Calcutta on 2nd October, after a stay of two months, and reached Cawnpore on 3rd November. His Force being then 5000 strong, with thirty-nine guns and howitzers, he considered himself justified in marching to the

[1] The railway was open from Calcutta to Raniganj.
[2] 14th to 20th September.
[3] 25th September.

second relief of Lucknow, having entrusted the defence of Cawnpore—which was threatened by the Gwalior Contingent—to Major-General C. A. Windham, supported by 500 men, adequate Artillery, and the hope of reinforcements from Calcutta.

He reached Lucknow on the 16th November, and—notwithstanding its immense population and its garrison of regular and irregular troops, amounting, according to General Outram's computation, to some 120,000 trained soldiers[1]—attacked it with 5000 men; and, after a fierce defence—the quality of which may be gathered from the fact that the enemy's dead in one strong post[2] were afterwards found to number 2000—relieved the garrison; and, by a happy strategy, succeeded in withdrawing 1500 non-combatants—sick and wounded, women and children—from the city, and in falling back on the Alambagh.

The Force, however, was bereft of its former leader, General Havelock, who died at Dilkusha on 24th November of sickness brought on by privations and fatigue, and was buried at the Alambagh. He had "lived a Christian, and died a hero."

Having left General Outram with Colonel Napier and a sufficient Force—nearly 4000 men of all arms, and thirty-five guns, howitzers, and mortars—at Alambagh, in order to aid the progress of the great British army which would eventually capture and punish Lucknow, Sir Colin Campbell fell back on Cawnpore, whence sounded the ominous and not quite unexpected growling of cannon. He arrived only just in time to avert the catastrophe, the possibility of which had induced him to *withdraw* the beleaguered garrison from the Residency instead of *occupying it in force*—the overwhelming of the Cawnpore garrison, then some 1700 strong, by the 20,000 men of the Gwalior Contingent, who

[1] Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 251. [2] The Sikandarbagh.

early in November hung like a storm-cloud at Kalpi, a disaster which would have involved the loss of the bridge of boats and the isolation of his Force in Oudh.

Soon after the departure for Lucknow of Sir Colin Campbell's Force, General Windham, hearing that the Gwalior Contingent was marching against him, had advanced to meet it, had been outflanked and compelled to fall back on his entrenchments with considerable loss in men and stores. The enemy had taken possession of the city of Cawnpore, and were preparing to capture the bridge, when Sir Colin's army reappeared and marched safely across it into cantonments. After a short sparring match, under cover of which Sir Colin dispatched his immense convoy of non-combatants to Allahabad, he engaged the enemy led by Tantia Topi and reinforced by the Nana's troops—the latter 25,000 strong, with forty guns—defeated them, pursued them for fourteen miles with considerable slaughter, and captured their camp equipment and thirty-two of their guns.

Having relieved the garrison of Lucknow, and having dispersed the enemy on his flank, Sir Colin hastened to realise the main objects of the campaign—the re-occupation of the line of communication with Delhi and the Panjab; the collection of the means—men, *matériel*, and transport—which would enable him to capture Lucknow; and the re-establishment of British rule, both civil and military, in Oudh, the North-West Provinces, and Bihar. He was ably aided in the execution of this task by the Force liberated by the fall of Delhi, and by fresh Panjab levies raised by John Lawrence.

After this brief summary of the general course of the Southern mutiny, we will return to the Delhi-theatre of war, and will resume the thread of incident and adventure which was Alex Taylor's contribution to the many-coloured web then woven on the loom of British Imperial history.

CHAPTER XV

ALEX TAYLOR—THE DOAB

As soon as the British position within Delhi was assured, Movable Columns were dispatched Southward and Westward to pursue the mutineers and to re-establish civil administration.

The first of these, commanded by General Greathed, and afterwards by General Hope Grant, marched, as early as 24th September, for Cawnpore, with the re-opening of the means of communication with the Southern base of operations as its task. Sweeping mutineers and rebels from its route, taking forts, and defeating the enemy in a series of brilliant engagements, it marched steadily down the Grand Trunk Road, until it was deflected from its route by the cries for succour which reached it from the refugees and garrison at Agra. The cultivated plain outside the fort was the scene of the celebrated battle of Agra, 10th October—which was a surprise both to the British army assailed and to the mutineers who attacked it, and was signalised by the splendid services of the British Cavalry and Artillery, and of the Native Cavalry, led by such gallant young horsemen as Dighton Probyn and John Watson.

A little more than a week after Greathed's departure, a second Column under General Showers marched on a similar journey of forcible pacification through the districts South-West of Delhi, and in the course of about a fortnight captured four important fortresses, two rebel Chiefs, seventy guns, and

specie to the value of £80,000. On 19th October the Jodhpur Legion mutinied and attacked the loyal Raja of Jaipur. The Force sent against it, under the command of Colonel Gerrard, met with stout resistance; Gerrard was killed,[1] and his place taken by Colonel Seaton, who, after punishing the mutineers, marched back to Delhi, from which he shortly led a fourth Column to the Southern theatre of war.[2]

Alex Taylor remained at Delhi till the end of October, when he was ordered to join Brigadier Greathed's Column at the head of a small Engineer Brigade; this, to his bitter disappointment and that of the Force with which he marched, was requisitioned by the notoriously timid civil authorities at Agra, and kept in its neighbourhood and that of Aligarh and Muttra.

He was thankful, however, to have left the city—the poisoned air of which was beginning to tell on health which had been shaken by the tremendous efforts of the siege. His letters at the outset of his life with the Movable Column have not his usual buoyancy. "I am down," he writes in November, "and not half myself. Fever, ague, and boils are my enemies. However, I can ride now with a little comfort; but soon get knocked up." Pure air, however, cold nights, and adventurous days spent out in the open soon restored his usual vigour. Indeed, in comparison with the strain and the nauseating accessories to the warfare at Delhi, those long November days in the Doab partook of the nature of picnics, rich in incident.

The following was the usual daily programme. The shuddering sleeper was awakened at the cold grey of dawn by a cup of hot tea, thrust under his nose by a brown hand; his warm body was presently submitted to an icy douche, poured over it from the mouth of a large earthenware pot, or of a *mussuck*—dressed goat-skin—and a little later he

[1] 16th November. [2] 23rd November.

would be warming frozen fingers over a huge camp-fire. Presently the sound of multitudinous hammering would arise, long streets of white cones would flutter to earth, and be placed in the shape of cubes and rolls of canvas on the backs of loudly protesting camels, and ere long the ambulant city, with its carts, doolies, and crowds of camp-followers, would be on the move. Somewhat ahead of the dust and noise would be little groups of young officers, riding gaily in the eager and nipping air — the rigours of which were only too rapidly tempered by the rays of the sun — to meet what adventures the day might hold — adventures which were frequently stirring enough."

Unfortunately the Column was sweeping the country of rebels and mutineers whose ideal of warfare was to give trouble and avoid death—"he who fights and runs away, will live to fight another day"—and who consequently seldom stood to meet their opponents. On 2nd November, Taylor writes: "We are in pursuit of some 4000 Ghazis, who have been stroking their beards and vowing to polish us off; but when we arrive we generally see men, women, and children running away, and find a blind man and an old woman in the place." This was not always the case, however; the Column sometimes met with stiff resistance. At Fatehpur Sikri, for instance, twelve Ghazis got into a rectangular enclosure surrounded by a veranda. The Englishmen burst open the gate and got in, but a parapet on the inner side of the flat roof enabled the enemy to make a stout fight, and, though the twelve were eventually killed, it was not before they had wounded some eighteen officers and men.

At the same place a duty fell to Taylor's lot which he always described as the most disagreeable he ever had to perform. After the rebels *above* ground had been disposed of, a report arose that thousands of them were hiding in vast underground rooms (*taikhanas*) to which native

magnates were wont to repair during the heat of the day. Towards dusk, Taylor was asked to lead a party below to examine these cellars, and, if necessary, to clear them. This he did, and—as the post was too perilous to allot to anyone else—carried the torch. He loved danger, but to walk with a light in his hand among the dancing shadows of a pitchy vault in the recesses of which armed enemies might be lurking was a performance little to his taste. A determined rebel with a gun in his hand might have done deadly work in the darkness; but fortunately the report proved incorrect, and Taylor and the members of his party emerged unhurt into the upper air, greatly to their own relief and that of everyone else.

These were typical incidents in the guerilla warfare in which Taylor was involved, and which, alas, contained frequent incidents which jarred on him, for he was a just and merciful man. It was absolutely necessary that blows should be delivered; the pity was that they fell so often in the wrong quarter. The rebels and mutineers too often escaped, but not the villages in which they had lodged, which expiated imputed guilt in fire and smoke. This, however, was inevitable, and, though justice to individuals miscarried, justice on a large scale was done, and the presence of the Column stemmed the rising tide of anarchy. "No doubt our march is doing much good," writes Taylor from Muttra, "not only by putting the *badmashes* into a state of alarm, but by opening the eyes of the Agra people to the fact that they are not surrounded by thousands of Pandies."

Sir Colin Campbell, meanwhile, having relieved the garrison of Lucknow, was preparing for the approaching big winter-campaign, his mind bent on two great prerequisites to success—the command of the Cawnpore-Delhi Road, and the provisioning of the great army that was to be.

The former had not been permanently secured by

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Greathed's brilliant march down the road; the Movable Column had cloven a way through the stormy waters, but the flood of rebellion had closed up behind it, leaving the Doab still to conquer.

Sir Colin[1] held Delhi and Agra on the Jumna; Cawnpore on the Ganges, half way between the Southern boundary of Rohilkhand and Allahabad; and Allahabad itself, at the base of the triangle formed by the convergence of the two rivers. A strong post on the North-East was needed, however, to complete the command of the Doab, and to protect his line of communication with Agra, Delhi, and the Panjab from attacks from Rohilkhand and Oudh. For this purpose he selected Fatehgarh—a strong native fortress situated at the junction of the Doab, Rohilkhand, and Oudh, and commanding a bridge of boats across the Ganges—as the strategic centre of his next group of movements. In pursuance of this plan, he directed General Seaton—2000 strong—to sweep Southwards from Delhi to Mainpuri; and General Walpole, then at Cawnpore—2000 strong—to make a North-Westerly semicircular movement, embracing Kalpi, with the same station as his objective. The combined Columns were then to concentrate on Fatehgarh, near which they would be joined by Sir Colin and the headquarters army—5000 strong—which would have marched thither by the Grand Trunk Road, clearing the right bank of the Ganges *en route*.

This movement had a secondary strategic purpose: it was intended to deceive the enemy into thinking that the immediate objective of the British army was Rohilkhand, then in a state of armed anarchy, whereas, Lord Canning, in view of the immense political importance of Lucknow, had determined that the capture of the capital of Oudh should be the next step in the campaign. With General Inglis and his brigade at Cawnpore, in charge of the line

[1] See Map facing p. 106.

of communication with Allahabad—threatened by the Gwalior Contingent—and with the forts of Agra, Delhi, Aligarh, and Fatehgarh, in his hands, Sir Colin would be in complete command of the roads running Northward from Calcutta and Southward from the Panjab. He would also be in a position to put down anarchy in the Doab, and to hold the disaffected in Oudh and Rohilkhand in check.

There remained the question of provisioning the immense army he was gathering together. To meet this object he had ordered great quantities of grain from the cornfields of Northern India to be collected at Delhi, Agra, and elsewhere, and dispatched Southward. Early in December, General Seaton was put in charge of this convoy, with directions to see it safely to its destination, and, *en passant*, to pacify the country on either side of the road down which it travelled; no easy task, for the province was studded with forts and fortified villages and overrun by large bodies of mutineers and rebels, while the convoy to be defended was immense. "An enormous thing," Taylor calls it, writing from Mainpuri on 30th December. "Just picture it to yourself," he adds: "3400 hackeries from Aligarh (*i.e.* Delhi), 2000 from Agra—total 5400, irrespective of camels. These, at ten yards per hackery, would occupy thirty-one miles of road in single file.[1] General Seaton disposed of the difficulty of defending this long mileage of stores enveloped in a cloud of dust and the hubbub of a moving multitude of men and beasts, by depositing it under the shelter of fortress-guns, and it was only after he had engaged the enemy to his front and cleared and occupied the road, that he allowed the mammoth train to roll forward.

Taylor was put in command of the Engineer Brigade attached to Seaton's Column, and was present at the en-

[1] As they marched in double file, it was actually seventeen miles in length.

gagements of Khasganj, Patiali, and Mainpuri. His day's work, though unchanged in general character, was now on a larger scale, and, as the enemy often braced themselves to offer stout resistance, the campaign was richer in actual encounters in force, and, therefore, most enjoyable. "Very jolly, wandering about the country taking guns," was his synthesis of the life.

An accidentally preserved account of one morning's adventures gives an idea of the manner of the life he led in the Movable Column. The battle of Khasganj—notable for the splendid charge of the Carabineers, who lost three out of five officers in the few minutes during which they captured the enemy's guns—was followed by the battle of Patiali, on 17th December, at which the rebels lost thirteen guns. The dawn of the 17th found the camp wrapped in the dust and turmoil of movement. Taylor and Hodson, eager to know all that was to be known, rode ahead with a small escort to reconnoitre. They soon came to a walled village, its gateway built up, and the place, apparently, quite empty. Taylor sent a sowar back for powder-bags, and, stretching himself on the ground, prepared to enjoy a nap; while Hodson, who was armed with a long hogspear only, went for a prowl among some neighbouring outhouses. The former was asleep when suddenly roused by Hodson, whose blue eyes were blazing with excitement. "Come and see," he said. Taylor followed him to a long low shed, within and outside of which nine men were lying in death-agony. It was an unexpected and painful sight. To his look of inquiry, Hodson replied—pointing to the house, which was one-storied, long, and low, without windows, and with a door in the middle—that he had walked up to that door and had kicked it open, when, to his surprise, a man armed with a talwar appeared in the low and narrow opening. Before the latter could get sufficiently clear of the framework of the doorway to use his weapon,

Hodson had run him through with his heavy six-foot spear. In this way nine men in succession met their death. This incident and the manner of its happening jarred on the young Engineer. No longer having any inclination to sleep, and there being no sign of his Sappers, *he* also began to prowl about. He examined the gateway, which, he assured himself, would certainly yield to no persuasion less forcible than that of powder. Wandering along the wall, he came to a sort of turret, pierced above by a window, up to which he succeeded in swinging himself. Climbing a staircase inside, he emerged on to a sea of flat roofs, cleft by narrow streets. Not a sound was to be heard ; the village seemed to have been deserted by its inhabitants on the approach of the avenging Column. Cautiously, he crept into the open, and was advancing quietly towards a main street with the intention of looking down to see if it were unoccupied, when he observed that a kneeling man was covering him with his matchlock, and blowing the while on the tinder which would not ignite. Between him and his assailant ran a narrow lane, seemingly some twelve feet wide. Both the take off and the landing place were probably fragile. There was no time to lose ; so, with a loud shout, he rushed straight at his enemy, jumping the street successfully. The man, however, had not waited to receive his opponent, but—intimidated by the unexpected onslaught —dropping his weapon had disappeared into the house below. Having proclaimed his whereabouts so loudly, Taylor thought it high time to relieve the village of his presence, and therefore sauntered to the wall, and soon succeeded in clambering down it. Shortly afterwards the Sappers came up with the Column, arranged their powder-bags and blew in the gate. The men were halted, and bread and grog were served to them, it being known that the enemy were not far distant.

Taylor and Hodson, meanwhile, pursuing their reconnaissance, rode on, accompanied by a strong detachment of Hodson's Horse. They soon came on the enemy entrenched in front of the village of Patiali. "It was still early morning," writes Taylor. "Our Infantry and General were a few miles in the rear. The entrenchments seemed to be a parapet and ditch in a straight line. It was of importance that we should ascertain the positions of the guns, . . . whether they were distributed along the face of the position, and so probably immovable, or concentrated, and so perhaps movable. I got this information by riding along their front at a suitable distance. The whole thirteen guns were tempted to fire on me in succession as I came opposite each of them. The result was a sketch of the position sent back to the General, with a suggestion that our field-battery should come up with a sufficient Cavalry escort, place itself on the prolongation of the front, and open fire. The proposal recommended itself to the General; the Artillery hastened to the front, placed itself suitably, and enfiladed the line of trench. Before our Infantry could arrive and take part in the fight, the enemy, some 5000 strong, broke and fled, leaving all their guns, camp-equipage, and carriage in our hands." The rebels were pursued by General Seaton's Cavalry, the Carabineers, the Lancers, and Hodson's Horse, for seven miles. All these events occurred between dawn and noon on the 17th—a typical, but full morning.

On another occasion—having again ridden ahead of the Force—Taylor and Hodson were sitting together on the side of a well-head, when about fifty rebel horsemen rode towards them. Resistance would have been hopeless, so the two officers continued their talk without so much as uncrossing their legs. Their luck was good; the horsemen, who had doubtless their own reasons for haste, rode quietly past.

SOUTHERN AREA OF REBELLION
ENGLISH MILES
0 20 40 60 80 100 200
ROHILKHAND
DELHI
THE DOAB
OUDH
Lucknow
Agra
Cawnpore
Allahabad
Benares
Patna
Jaipur
Gwalior
Jhansi
Kalpi
Futtehpur
Jaunpur
Fyzabad
Rae Bareli
Shahjahanpur
Bareilly
Meerut
Kurnal
Rohtak
Bhurtpur
Dholpur
Mynpoory
Mirzapore
Ghazeepore
Dinapore
Rhangalpur
Berhampore
Burdwan
CALCUTTA
Bay of Bengal
GRAND TRUNK ROAD
RAJPUTANA
CENTRAL INDIA
BUNDELKHAND
R. Ganges
Jumna R.
Sarda R.
Gumti R.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SIEGE TRAIN

On the junction of the two Movable Columns with the headquarters army at Fatehgarh early in February, Taylor's command naturally passed into the hands of his seniors. From this date onward he was occasionally occupied with the interesting and difficult task of throwing boatbridges across rough-banked and shoally rivers, but his work henceforward was mainly concerned with the extensive preparation Sir Colin was making for the coming attack on Lucknow; indeed, he had previously been in correspondence with General Outram and General Napier on this point.

Brigadier-General Robert Napier—who was destined to command the Engineer Brigade during the siege—had been the Chief of General Outram's Staff since August; he had fought his way through the streets of Lucknow with Havelock's relieving army; had brought Havelock's rear-guard into the Residency on 25th September, a brilliant feat of arms; had been blockaded in the Residency for some eight weeks, during which he had initiated mining operations on a vast scale;[1] and had ridden out under fire to

[1] "I am aware," writes Outram, "of no parallel in modern warfare to our series of mines. Twenty-one shafts, aggregating two hundred feet in depth, and 3291 feet of gallery have been executed. The enemy advanced twenty mines against the palaces and outposts: of these they exploded three, which caused us loss of life; and two which did no injury; seven have been

meet Sir Colin's relieving army on 17th November, when he was severely wounded. He had, moreover, been Outram's right-hand man throughout the months during which that officer had been left with 4000 men to hold an ill-defended position, eleven miles in circuit, as an advance-post of the army collecting at Cawnpore, against 120,000 organised troops, with more than 130 guns, besides the army and turbulent scum of a population of 700,000 souls.[1] During this period he had led many a brilliant sortie against numerically superior forces, and had conducted more than one dangerous reconnaissance with the express purpose of collecting material on which to base the construction of a Plan of Attack on Lucknow. These personal experiences were admirably supplemented by a very accurate survey of part of the city previously made by Lieutenant Moorsom of H.M. 52nd, and by the excellent information procured for him by General Outram's Intelligence Department.

This Engineer officer of unique attainments and exceptional opportunities gave it "as his deliberate opinion that it would take 20,000 men to perform the initial operation of subduing the city,"—so writes Sir Colin Campbell to Lord Canning on 22nd December. The British Force actually assembled eventually amounted to 33,000 men of all arms, and 164 guns inclusive of General Franks' Force, and that of our Gurkha ally, Jang Bahadur.[2] This large army was handled by a cautious Scotchman, who attached much importance—indeed, almost too much—to the preservation of the lives of his men, and who was resolved not to strike until he had com-

blown in; and out of seven others the enemy have been driven, and their galleries taken possession of by our miners."—Forrest, *op. cit.* (*State Papers*), ii. p. 256 (Introduction).

[1] Forrest, *ibid.*, vol. ii. (Lucknow and Cawnpore), p. 369 (Introduction).

[2] Sir Colin's Force, 18,000; Jang Bahadur's Force, 9000; General Franks' Force, 6000.

pletely marshalled all his forces, and then to place his blow, scientifically. "I will make the most liberal use," he writes, "of the Sappers and heavy Artillery, in order to economise life. I will not risk more in streets and suburbs than I can possibly help, till the road is so far clear as to enable the soldiers to be supervised by their Commanders, and feel their mutual support." This dictum was the keynote of the Plan of Attack which Robert Napier was called on to prepare, and it was one to which his own ideas were already attuned.

Three questions immediately presented themselves for solution; they concerned (1) the direction of the attack, (2) the immense amount of material which would then be needed, and (3) the sources whence it might be drawn.

To take the last question first: which were the arsenals to be utilised for the latter purpose, and what their respective resources? On the North lay Agra, 179 miles from Cawnpore, with Delhi behind it, and—still further up-country—the arsenals of Ferozpur and Phillaur. To the South there was Allahabad. The answer is given by Sir Colin in a letter to Lord Canning written on January 11th (1858). "We are hard at work," he says. "Indents and carriage to a large extent have been sent to Agra for the necessary Siege Train. After a long consultation with Major Turner, R.A., and Captain Taylor, B.E.—the officers best acquainted with the resource of the different arsenals—it was determined to use Agra for ourselves, and to leave Allahabad to supply General Franks and Jang Bahadur."[1]

Taylor[2]—who was destined to command the Bengal

[1] *Life of Colin Campbell, Lord Clyde*, by Lieutenant-General Shadwell, C.B., 2 vols., Blackwood & Son, Edinburgh and London; 1881, ii. p. 97.

[2] Sir Colin had been anxious to subjugate Rohilkhand before attacking Lucknow. The precedence to be given to the latter was kept secret as long as feasible. In a letter written in January to Sir James Outram, Sir Colin says: "No one but the Artillery officer (Turner) and Taylor of

Engineers at the siege, and whose position at Delhi, especially after the fall of the place, and his recent stay at Agra, had given him exceptionally first-hand acquaintance with these two arsenals—was now kept constantly on the move in the interest both of the Plan of Attack and of the preparation of the Siege Train. For this purpose he travelled backwards and forwards between Agra, Cawnpore, Alambagh, and Jalalabad—the latter a fort, a mile to the rear of General Outram's position at Alambagh, which served as the Engineers' depôt.

Sir Colin returned to Cawnpore from Fatehgarh on the 4th of February, and, shortly after his arrival, was joined by Robert Napier—from Alambagh—who spent some weeks with him as his guest. The object of this visit was the discussion of the Plan of Attack which Napier had already formulated in a letter directed to the Commander-in-Chief on 4th February, a Plan which was substantially that eventually put into effect. He brought Alex Taylor with him, and this young officer was frequently granted the honour of forming a third at the long discussions which took place.

Before glancing at the Plan which was the *raison d'être* of these meetings, it would be well to examine in some detail the topography of the city to be attacked.

Lucknow[1]—a town of irregular shape, five miles in length and twenty in circumference, with an extreme width to the West of a mile and a half, and a minimum width to the East of one mile—is bathed along its whole five miles of Northern boundary by the broad waters of the Gumti, and on the East and South-East by those of a deep canal running

the Engineers, and our friend Bruce (head of the Intelligence Department), and Mansfield in this camp are aware of the orders I have received with respect to Lucknow."—Shadwell, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 101.

[1] See Map, p. 138.

between high and rugged banks. It consisted, in the main, of densely packed houses and narrow streets. Its Eastern extremity—two square miles in extent—was freer however, and contained large gardens, parade grounds, and other open spaces, together with a number of magnificent buildings generally embedded in well-watered gardens. About half a mile from its South-Eastern boundary a succession of splendid and fantastic buildings—palaces, tombs, and mosques—stretched to the North-West: *i.e.* the Begam Bagh (the Queen's Garden), with its many appurtenances, the Hazratganj, the Imambara, the Kaisarbagh (the Imperial Palace), not far from which lay the shattered walls and devastated gardens of the British Residency, girt about with the wreckage of native palaces; the Machhi Bhawan, also (the house of fish), the great Imambara—a vast mosque-like building three hundred feet in length—and the Shish Mahal (the house of mirrors), and others.

Outside the city, and about a mile to the South of its South-Easterly extremity, lay Claude Martin's[1] College for European lads born in the East—a fantastic building, which, like its founder, was a *résumé* of the genius of the Latin races run wild far from the restraints of home. Immense, long, low, many-windowed, its façade and silhouette were patterned with the wayward baroque lines of *frontoni*, balconies, and balustrades adorned with a medley of oriental monsters, stucco copies of classic masterpieces, and

[1] An unlettered Lyons lad, who ran away from a dull bourgeois home, fought as a trooper under Lally against Clive, rose from the ranks to the position of an officer in the French army, and served subsequently first under the British flag, and then under that of the Nawab of Lucknow. Soldier, moneylender, botanist, indigo-planter, collector and builder, founder of guns, bells, and medals, benefactor of the poor, and patron of a college which still opens the doors of the knowledge which is their birthright to hundreds of European boys, does history hold a more romantic figure than that of this soldier of fortune, with the face, the manners, and the heart of a Prince, and the morals of his times and of the land of his adoption?

the original handiwork—far from classic—of hundreds of Latin artists,[1] who had been transported to India by this son of a French adventurer in order to actualise his dream of a palace in which he could live and die. In front of this façade a high column sprang from the midst of a wide sheet of water—architectural features reminiscent of both France and Italy. Even more redolent of race was the interior of the building—with its vaulted rooms stuccoed with reliefs in the taste of Rome and hung with genuine *gobelins*, its picture gallery with its masterpiece by Claude and its forty-two Indian subjects by Zoffani, its armoury of oriental weapons, and its invaluable collection of Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts, jewels, and medals, the latter cast by himself. The Nawab, casting envious eyes on his servant's rising house, had offered him a million sterling for its possession. "No!" the Frenchman had replied; and had secured its posthumous possession by converting it into a tomb and college: he was buried in its vaults, and bequeathed the building to the use of poor European lads.

On the high plateau behind the Martinière rose another princely mansion, "Dilkusha"—the "Heart's Delight"—the summer home of the Nawab's ladies; and behind it yet again, the great house of Bibiapur, also a State residence. All these buildings, together with the magnificent parks in which they were embedded, were destined to be occupied by British soldiery during the coming siege.

Two bridges spanned the Gumti, one of iron, the other of masonry; these debouched on to highways leading, respectively, to the Residency and to the heart of the city.

Alambagh and Jalalabad—the Engineers' dépôt—lay

[1] Many of these were afterwards absorbed into the population of the Paris of the East, where they founded a school of meretricious semi-European art, the unsavoury offspring of the Quartier Latin and the nautch-girl. They were largely responsible for the decorations of the palaces of Lucknow.

respectively two and three miles from the Southern banks of the canal.

The rebels were known to have thrown up three strong lines of defence.[1] The first, a mile and a half in length, rested on the river on the right, and ran for a mile and a half along the canal which formed the South-Eastern boundary of the city; the second—running parallel with the first, and connected with it by groups of strong works—screened the Queen's Palace and the large buildings in its neighbourhood, and, finally, after an irregular course, rested also on the river; while the third, facing Northward, defended the great complex of buildings and gardens which went to form the Kaisarbagh. Colonel Napier proposed that Sir Colin should draw the fangs of these strong and systematised defences, two of which ran South-Westward from the North-East, by enfilading them from the North, and by turning them on the South-West. He suggested that the Commander-in-Chief should divide his Force into two wings; one of which, rich in heavy Artillery and in Cavalry, crossing the river on the South-East, should take them from the North-East in flank and rear; while the other, advancing from the South-East, should assault, turn, and occupy them, *after* they had been disabled by the enfilading fire of the heavy guns of the Column operating on the Northern bank of the river.

The following is an extract from the letter containing these proposals:—

4th February.

"DEAR SIR COLIN,—I am afraid you will be disappointed at not receiving the projects, but our people have been bringing in a considerable amount of intelligence to fill up our plans, which has tempted me to enter into details. I may, however, briefly

[1] See Map facing p. 138.

state that notwithstanding that the enemy has made a good many defences, and thrown up a ditch and rampart round the Kaisarbagh, and has endeavoured to cut away all the passages across the canal, I do not apprehend any great difficulty.

I would propose :—

(1) To encamp the Force sufficiently behind the Dilkusha to be out of fire.

(2) To establish a bridge on the Gumti to pass over artillery and cavalry in order to cut off the enemy's supplies, and to deter them from bringing out guns on the North side of the river to annoy us.

(3) To cross the canal, in the first instance, at Banks's House under cover of artillery, and to place guns in position to bear on the mass of buildings which flank the European Infantry barracks, the Begam's house, and the Hazratganj. . . .

This position *takes in flank all the defences of the north side* of the Kaisarbagh, and from them we may penetrate gradually to the Kaisarbagh with the aid of the Sappers and gunpowder. . . .

Until we take the Kaisarbagh, we shall have as little street-fighting as possible, and I hardly expect they will wait an assault. . . . Jalalabad will be our depôt, and, when we have got the enemy's guns driven off, we may bring our Park up to the Dilkusha."[1]

To return to Alex Taylor.

It was during this visit to Cawnpore that Colonel Napier and he made the acquaintance of the Pioneer and Prince of War Correspondents—William Howard Russell—whom Sir Colin kept fully informed of all that went on in the headquarters camp, and who drew so vivid a picture of the romance and turmoil of the move to Lucknow, of the picturesque and strenuous life in camp, and of the excitement and tragedy of the glorious dénouement of the

[1] Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, iv. pp. 254–5.

struggle. Many and delightful are his portraits of personages in camp, drawn in passing. Not the least attractive among these is a sketch of the Chief Engineer, whose manner he describes as "charming, kindly, quiet, and free," adding—"his eyes have a serene, *good* expression, which invites confidence and commands respect."[1] He was also introduced to some of the Bengal Engineers—"Taylor, Brownlow, Greathed, and others"—whom he described as "men of remarkable intelligence and distinguished by past services, although they are still quite young." He tells a characteristic story of Robert Napier in connection with the destruction by mining of certain Hindu temples at Cawnpore, which obstructed the firing line of guns intended to protect the boat-bridges by which the army would cross the Ganges. "Some of the priests interceded for the safety of their shrines," he writes. "'Now listen to me,' Robert Napier made reply. 'You were all here when our women and children were murdered. You were in those shrines and temples we are now about to destroy, not for vengeance, as you know well, but on account of military considerations in connection with the safety of the bridge. If any of you can show that he did an act of kindness to a Christian man, woman, or child; nay, if he can prove that he uttered one word of intercession for the life of any one of them, the temple where he worshipped shall be spared!' Well said, brave Robert Napier. There was no reply, and the temples were destroyed."[2]

Presently the arsenal at Agra—which had long resounded with the clang of hammers and the roar of furnaces working at full blast—put forth the fruit of its labours. The Siege

[1] *My Diary in India* (1858–9) by William Howard Russell, *Times* correspondent, 2 vols., Routledge, Warne & Routledge, London, 1860, i. 263.

[2] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. 220.

Train, *without which there could be no siege of Lucknow*, rolled out of the gateway on 22nd January. Twelve miles was it in length—twelve miles of carts, bullocks, and elephants—and slowly it crept across the 179 miles which separated it from Cawnpore, and the forty-seven miles more, which separated it from Jalalabad, where its arrival was ardently expected.

Every precaution prudence could suggest had been taken to ensure its safety. It was guarded by an escort of 3000 men, and marched through country recently pacified by General Walpole. Its left was protected by a cordon of strong posts. Seaton at Fatehgarh—at the head, it is true, of only 2500 men,—protected the Doab from an incursion of the Rohilkhand mutineers, a group of whom, 15,000 strong, were encamped at a distance of seven miles from him. The river and road from Fatehgarh to Benares were held by a succession of strong posts—Miran-ki-Sarai; Bithur; Cawnpore, commanded by General Inglis of Lucknow fame; Allahabad, held by a Madras Brigade; and Benares, protected from attack from the North by General Franks' Brigade. The line on the West was weaker, it being considered that the Gwalior Contingent—in whose rear the Madras troops under Sir Hugh Rose were operating vigorously—had been too shattered by the blow dealt it by Sir Colin at Cawnpore on 6th December to venture to re-cross the Jumna.

Early in February the head of this great convoy of siege-material pushed into Cawnpore, and dragged its slow length through the station and across the bridge of boats. Once over the river—the Doab side of which was a cliff some thirty feet high, while its Oudh-border shelved gently into green fields—it crawled day after day along a straight broad line of elevated causeway, which traversed country as level as a lake, but highly cultivated, and adorned with frequent clumps (topes) of magnificent trees. Occasion-

ally the steady tramp of a British regiment and a procession of figures—dimly seen through a veil of fine white kankar-dust—would surge past it on its way to Lucknow, and in its wake would follow a loose crowd of camp-followers with impedimenta, beneath the winnowing of whose feet the dust-cloud thickened to choking point. On and on, steadily, though slowly, the smoking Siege Train rolled, while the sun's rays grew fiercer and fiercer, and men dropped as they moved; on, past sunbaked fields which had been swamps, past shrinking lakes, and past deserted villages, the crenellated walls of which enclosed flat roofs, bright white-washed sarais, monkeys, and tree-embedded pagodas. On and on it moved—always at a snail's pace—towards the distant cloud of hovering kites which never failed to overhang the site of the next night's camp. The nearer approaches to these resting-places were invariably defaced by the relics of former occupants—bleached beef and mutton bones, the blackened sites of deserted camp-fires, and the rough, jagged walls of native cooking-places—unpleasant ground to ride over in the dusk.

Sir William Russell, of the wizard pen, has described the conditions which invested the daily early move of this army with all the glamour of a journey in the Arabian Nights, and transformed it into a shifting phantasmagoria of strange and eerie sights and sounds. He tells of a clear *bright blue* night-sky, serene moon, shadowy trees, dim, far-stretching plain studded with camp-fires and columns of smoke, streets of white shining cones bright in the moonlight, dark faces in sudden illumination, plunging horses, and other sights made marvellous by their *mise en scène*; and not of these only, but of the babel of sound in which they were embedded; he speaks of a multitudinous turmoil like the muttering of the sea, born of the sound of many voices and many movements, the cries of animals, the clatter of

hammers on tent-pegs, and—shrill and high above all—the incessant yells of natives calling into the darkness and turmoil for lost friends—the "Ho bhai!" so familiar to the Anglo-Indian. The magic of the scene deepens as the orb of night gives place to that of day. "As the moon sank in the heavens," he writes, "the line of our march became more and more like some dream of another world, or a recollection of some great scene at a theatre. . . . The horizontal rays just touched the gleaming arms and heads of the men, and lighted up the upper portions of the camels and the elephants, which resembled islands in an opaque sea, while the plain looked like an inky waste dotted with star-like fires. The sun soon began to make his approach visible, and an arch of greyish red appeared in the East, spreading but not deepening, till the Far-darter himself rose like a ball of fire in the hazy sky."[1]

On and on the great caravan presses, like some gigantic constrictor which will soon envelop Lucknow in its deadly folds, and with it march the interminable lines of the vast army of which Sir Colin is now *placing the pieces*, and which he has gathered together from all the points of the compass —from the Panjab, Madras, Bombay, Burma, Persia, China, the Mauritius, and England. On the train moves, over the ground which Havelock and Outram have rendered classic—over the heights of Mangalwar, past Unao, Basiratganj, Nawabganj, and across the hunchbacked bridge over the Banni—until it reaches a solitary crumbling fort near a large lake, about which lie scaling ladders and skeletons with red rags clinging to their bones. This is Jalalabad, the Engineers' depôt.

General Outram and General Napier receive it. Taylor is again absorbed in the toils of organisation and distribution, in the study of plans, and in dangerous rides of

[1] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. p. 233.

reconnaissance about an uncultivated arid plain, seamed with deep dry stony water-courses, and patched with woods and occasional fields of tall sugar-cane, which give excellent cover to the enemy's sowars. Nearer Lucknow, hostile field-works rise like scars on the stony ground; and still nearer, great suburban houses, as strong as forts, stand within watered gardens encircled by high walls—till more excellent cover.

On the 2nd of March the Engineers at Jalalabad saw the first instalment of the great army destined to take Lucknow defile past their left on the way to its allotted post outside the South-Eastern extremity of the city. In this military procession, the Bengal Engineers who had fought at Delhi saw many comrades who had then shared their labours, and many Corps, also, which were new to India; among the latter were their brothers, the Royal Engineers. Prominent among the former were officers of note at Delhi — their late General, Sir Archdale Wilson, now commanding the Artillery Division, with the stately figure of Tombs at his side; Hope Grant, followed by the familiar white jackets and bright turbans of the 9th Lancers; Dighton Probyn and "Johnnie" Watson, leading the cloud of pennants which danced above the red and fawn-colour, the gleaming scimitars, and gaily caparisoned horses of the Panjab Cavalry; Alfred Wilde, surrounded by the blue and silver of the Panjab Rifles, the Highlanders of Northern India, who were brigaded with the Highlanders of the West, with whom—such is the freemasonry of gallantry —they soon established a friendship as close as that which united the Gurkhas and 60th Rifles at Delhi. The dramatic character of this juxtaposition of dark faces and fair, red-haired Scotchmen—with their swinging kilts, nodding plumes, and skirling pipes — was heightened by their unusual proximity to the workman-like blue and white of

the Naval Brigade ; while a final touch to the cosmopolitan character of the Force was given by the flaming scarlet pagris of Hodson's Horse, and later by the addition of the bizarre figures of Jang Bahadur's little Gurkhas. With the first column marched a good number of Sappers and Miners, led by General Robert Napier, with whom rode Colonel Harness, R.E., Major Nicholson, R.E., Major Alex Taylor, of the Bengal Engineers, and other officers of the Corps.

On and on the gallant pageant wound—driving back hostile picquets, capturing guns, and establishing strong outposts. Its members had marched about three miles, when something like an immense railway-embankment rose on their view ; it lay along the canal—which stood to it in the relation of a wet ditch—was bastioned at intervals, and spoke freely in terms of flame and smoke, and—something more. Above and behind it floated verdure and the summits of spires and cupolas. This was the enemy's first line of defence, and right formidable it looked.

At about four miles from the Alambagh, the head of the army halted in the delectable pleasure-grounds of the Dilkusha, a walled park, normally inhabited by delicate imported antelopes and big black-faced monkeys ; and there the camp was pitched, ostensibly out of the range of the enemy's guns, though some of the British officers' Goanese servants pulled long faces, observing—"Much cannon-ball coming here, sar!"

The Engineers, however, carried their powder and inflammable stores to a place of greater safety—Bibiapur, to the right and rear of high-lying Dilkusha—and there, for a time, the Commander-in-Chief fixed his headquarters also. Taylor, doubtless, on arrival climbed rapidly to the roof of the great House at Bibiapur—in the gardens of which the Nawab's ladies were wont to idle through long hot summer

days, and which, like Dilkusha and other palaces, was an oriental *édition de luxe* of such Italian pleasure-houses as the villas of Tivoli and Frascati—his object being to command a bird's-eye view of the future field of operations.

Marvellous, dream-like in its loveliness, was the panorama which lay stretched before him. "A vision," writes Russell, who was enjoying a similar experience on the same day from the roof of Dilkusha—"a vision of palaces, minars, domes, azure and golden, cupolas, colonnades, long façades of fair perspective in pillar and column, all rising up amid a calm, still ocean of the brightest verdure. Look for miles and miles away, and still the ocean spreads, and the towers of the fairy city gleam in its midst. Spires of gold glitter in the sun. Turrets and gilded spheres shine like constellations. There is nothing mean or squalid to be seen . . . a city more vast than Paris, as it seems, and more brilliant."

Very beautiful, but, as at Delhi, so now, Taylor was in no mood for æsthetic raptures, nor had he time for them. His attention was fixed on the military points of the exquisite view at his feet. With the help of field-glasses he could identify the houses and works with those indicated on the map in his hands. First came the river, on his immediate right, sweeping North and then abruptly North-Westward in great swinging curves, and forming the distant Northern boundary of the city; while the canal—the city's South-Eastern boundary—and the huge embanked first line of defence could be seen over the trees at his feet. On the extreme left of this embankment rose a strong group of works in front of a two-storied high-peaked house—"Banks's bungalow," evidently—these seemed to run backward into the city, but were soon lost to view in luxuriant greenery, and in "a wilderness of fair architecture." The "thing of beauty" nearest to the eye was the Begam's Palace, behind

and to the right of Banks's bungalow ; behind it, again, was the little Imambara, "a mass of minarets, flat roofs, and long ornamented frontage" ; and beyond it, yet again, "a blaze of gilding, spirés, domes, and cupolas," the rebel citadel, the King's Palace, high above which floated fantastic paper kites, with the flying of which some of the inmates of the palace occupied themselves, as the coils of death closed slowly round them.

North-West of the Palace lay the ruins of the Residency ; and, still further Westward, a number of great and magnificent buildings, with which Taylor was not then concerned. On the right, he could distinguish the Mess House, the Sikandarbagh, and—beyond the shining river—the racecourse and stand, stretches of suburbs, and—in the far distance—the Kokraal viaduct. To his immediate front rose the Dilkusha—on the flat roof of which the Commander-in-Chief and his Staff were already collected—and, further away, the Martinière, still in the enemy's possession. On his left, as far as the eye could reach—indeed, eventually, to within a mile of Alambagh—was springing a thickening, lengthening semicircle of white tents, looking like an immense fairy-ring of fungi invaded by troops of ants, seen through some gigantic magnifying glass.

He had no time, however, to linger on that delightful house-top, for the Engineer Park was marching into the camp, and, large as its bulk had been when it left Agra, it had been vastly increased by additions *en route*, notably by that of immense supplies of gabions and fascines, made and stored by the Sappers at Jalalabad. His young subordinate at Delhi, Lieutenant Pemberton, was the Director of the Park. It was so important, however, that the vast mass of siege-material should be rapidly accessible, that every future want should be foreseen and every contingency provided for, that he himself spent every moment he could spare

from the active duties of his command, in the Engineer camp. It is to this and to the foregoing phase of his services—the collection and preparation of the Park—that Robert Napier refers in his official report on the siege operations, written from the Martinière on 31st March 1858 :—"To Major Alex Taylor, commanding the Bengal Engineers," he says, "I am very deeply obliged for his invaluable services and energy in the preparation of the Engineer Park, in which nothing we required was wanting." He then goes on to speak of his subsequent military services.

CHAPTER XVII

LUCKNOW

It will be remembered that the first move in Brigadier Napier's Plan of Attack was entrusted to the right wing of the army. The command of this wing was confided by the Commander-in-Chief to General Outram, who had orders to cross the Gumti near the Engineer camp at Bibiapur, to seize positions on the North of the city, and from thence to enfilade the enemy's defences. While General Outram was establishing himself, the left wing—which was under Sir Colin's personal command—had to content itself with holding its ground and the enemy's attention, and with beating down hostile fire directed on it chiefly from the Martinière and the trenches, until the enemy's first line of defence had been taken in rear and flank by the heavy artillery fire of the right wing, operating from the further side of the river. Then, and then only—*after* the enemy's work had been practically disabled—would the left wing be allowed to assault and occupy them.

When Brigadier Napier knew that he was to receive the command of the Engineer Brigade at Lucknow, he was at considerable pains to secure the command of the Bengal Engineers—his own Corps—to Alex Taylor, with whose work he was familiar, and whose exceptional siege experience —both at Delhi and Multan—would be invaluable to him during the coming struggle. He saw to it, therefore, that officers of the Bengal Engineers senior to the newly-made

Captain were given work to do away from Lucknow. He saw to it also that Alex Taylor was attached to the Column with which he himself intended to operate—the left Column—to which would be entrusted the difficult task of sapping a way through palaces and courtyards into the heart of the city, on the principles on which that young officer had worked at Delhi. The connection of Taylor with this Column had the further advantage of giving him a few days' leisure before the Force was involved in active service, days which, in view of his intimate connection with the evolution of the Siege Train, it was hoped he would spend, as far as possible, in the headquarters of the Engineer Park, then under process of establishment.

General Napier also wished Alex Taylor to accompany him on several reconnaissances made on the left in order to establish the site of a Battery to be erected directly the enemy's first line of defence was in British hands. The objective of this Battery would be Banks's house, the centre of a large group of hostile works which it would be one of the most pressing tasks of the left Column to attack in force—as soon as it had turned the first line of defence—and to convert into a base; from which base it would advance on the Begam's Palace, this being the key to what was practically the enemy's citadel—the Imperial Palace. Finally, General Napier informed Alex Taylor that, in his capacity of officer commanding the Bengal Engineers, he would be required to accompany the Commander-in-Chief, his own General, and the officer commanding the Royal Engineers with Outram's Column, in the formal reconnaissance of the positions seized by Outram on the *further* side of the river; which reconnaissance would prelude the assumption of the offensive by the left Column. This reconnaissance did not take place until the 8th.

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of March were devoted to the

task of moving the army, under fire, into position, and of erecting Batteries intended to check the enemy's deadly cannonade on to posts of which he had previously measured the ranges.

On the 4th March Sir Colin began to translate the Plan of Attack into action. Sheltered by the shadows of night, the Engineers under Major Nicholson, R.E.—who served throughout these proceedings with Outram's Column—threw a bridge of casks, strong enough to withstand the passage of elephants and of 24-pounders, across the Gumti. A second bridge, though strongly attacked, was finished next day, under the protection of a covering party with guns. The passage of Outram's troops—7000 men of all arms—began on the 5th towards midnight, and should have been completed by dawn. The Artillerymen, however, had so great a difficulty in getting their guns on to the spot—for though the moon sailed in all her splendour through a cloudless sky, the light which filtered through the heavy foliage of overhanging trees was fitful and the ground broken and deeply cut by water-courses—that the greater part of Outram's Force was on the wrong side of the river when the Eastern sky began to flush with a promise of dawn. The successful passage of the river was all-important; Sir Colin—his nerves on edge with anxiety—rode down in person to urge things forward, while General Outram—seeing that all that was possible was being done—sat down on a fallen tree and lighted his cheroot.

The sun still hung low on the horizon when Outram's vanguard had effected its passage, and had embarked on the series of flanking movements on which the success of the Plan of Attack depended. All day long, however, a stream of men, beasts, and baggage streamed over the floating roadway. "Will the Column never cease?" writes Russell, watching it from the roof of the Dilkusha. "Hour after

hour it has been passing over. . . . What swarms of camp-followers! What mighty impedimentum of baggage, deserts of camels, wildernesses of elephants, all pouring along the river, and then following in parallel lines the folds of the serpent-like column which is winding away through the cornfields[1] till it disappears in the woods on the horizon. The Column and its dependencies were four hours crossing over; as to the baggage, it was not clear of the bridge even at night."[2]

Outram, ere sundown, had fought his way—stoutly opposed by the enemy—to a point near the village of Chinhat—for ever connected with memories of Sir Henry Lawrence—upon a road leading across the Kokraal viaduct, and running parallel with the Northern boundaries of the city. He spent the next two days in skirmishing through gardens, villages, and suburban quarters, steadily pushing his front forward.

On the night of the 8th, he had a Battery for ten guns erected near the Kokraal viaduct (No. 1R.) and trained on to the Grand Stand on the racecourse—a high fortified building commanding the river-bank and the spaces and houses in its neighbourhood. This Grand Stand was captured after a severe struggle at 7 a.m. on the 9th, the fact being communicated to the Commander-in-Chief by the unfurling of the flag of the 1st Fusiliers on its roof. His Engineers immediately ran up a second Battery (No. 2R.) which completely enfiladed the enemy's first line of works, and silenced the worst of the fire which had protected the precincts of the Martinière and had vetoed its occupation by us. On the same day, he occupied the bank of the Gumti as far as the Badshah-bagh, a large castellated royal villa in a park of fine trees,

[1] Indian corn, then nearly ripe.

[2] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. p. 279.

overlooked by a graceful mosque, and thus completed the manœuvre which was the necessary preliminary to the direct attack of the enemy's fortified front.[1]

The British flag fluttering from the top of the Grand Stand was the cue for which the left wing had been waiting. On seeing it, the Commander-in-Chief—having made the reconnaissance already alluded to, with Brigadier Napier, Majors Nicholson and Taylor in attendance—gave it the expected signal to strike in. The Martinière was first attacked. The fire of guns, which had been threshing it for days, now beat on it with redoubled fury; the limbs of its stucco goddesses flew into the air, parapets fell in, and the angles of its walls crumbled away; but dark faces still looked out of its windows. The thunder of Outram's enfilading Battery on the other side of the river filled the air, however, and it was obvious that the mutineers would soon have to abandon the extreme left of their position.

It was known, on our left, that the hour of action was at hand. Expectant regiments waited in the shelter of the guns on the Dilkusha plateau. At 2 p.m. punctually this firing ceased. The 42nd and 93rd Highlanders and the 4th Panjabis, followed by the 53rd (Shropshires) and the 90th regiment, doubled across the 1000 yards of broken ground which separated them from the Martinière, and flung themselves against it with a cheer; its occupants fled, unnerved by the sound of heavy firing from the river and by the knowledge that, if the great line of fortification which Outram was enfilading fell into British hands, they would be surrounded; and so Claude Martin's College dropped into our hands without a struggle, though not without loss, for the enemy's guns from their first line of defence were not yet silenced, and they fired heavily on the stormers.

The victors' attention was now fixed on the enemy's

[1] See Map facing p. 138.

works to their front. The 4th Panjabis—gallantly led by Alfred Wilde, long since recovered from cholera—supported by the 42nd Highlanders, had pushed on to a village in proximity to these defences, when to their surprise they saw a dripping figure in British uniform appear on the roof of the Redoubt facing them on the extreme right, and signal to them to come on. This was Lieutenant Butler of the 1st Fusiliers, in Outram's Column, who, thinking that the enemy had abandoned the fort on which Outram's guns had been playing, had swum the river to verify the supposition, and had, happily, found it correct —a gallant feat which earned him the Victoria Cross. The Assaulting Column was not slow to act on his suggestion, and by nightfall the enemy's greatest Work was occupied from the redoubt on the extreme right to the neighbourhood of Banks's House by Wilde's Rifles, their friends the Highlanders, and the Shropshires. And thus the first two moves in the Project of Attack were successfully completed; Outram's Column had succeeded in capturing the Northern bank of the river, and in enfilading the enemy's first line of defence, of which the left Column was in actual possession.

Taylor's turn had come. His materials were prepared, and his men ready; while at Jalalabad they had been constantly practised on the rapid construction of Batteries. Supported by Wilberforce Greathed—who had served with him at Delhi—and by his dear friend, Elliot Brownlow—Henry Brownlow's brother—he swept down to a previously selected site between the Martinière and Dilkusha roads, and there a Battery armed with four heavy guns, one howitzer, and three 8-inch mortars arose during the night, and at dawn next morning opened fire on to Banks's House. "I went down and stayed by it for some time, watching the shot and bombs flying into the town," writes Russell. "Just as I was turning to go away, I heard an exclamation

of alarm from the men at one of the mortars. As the smoke of the gun cleared away I saw the headless trunk of a naval officer on the ground. It was a horrid sight. He had been killed by a shell which had been discharged just as he rode before the muzzle."[1]

It was still early morning when the high wall surrounding Banks's House was breached; the enemy, shaken by the loss of works which they had believed almost impregnable, offered but little resistance; the Bungalow was very shortly in our possession, and the first line of defence completely turned. Under Taylor's direction a Battery for four heavy guns and eight mortars was then run up with surprising celerity in the proximity of the newly-captured house; he also had two naval guns and four mortars placed in neighbouring buildings. All these guns concentrated their fire on the Begam's Kothi, a great block of buildings and enclosed gardens which formed the most advanced front of the left extremity of the enemy's second line of defence. At the same time, Batteries playing on the Kaisarbagh were erected on the right bank of the Gumti by Outram's Engineers. When night fell, the air was alive with the rush of soaring shells, and the ear stunned with the loud report of their explosions.

Russell, writing from the camp, now pitched in front of the artificial waters of the Martinière, describes the scene: "Placidly outside our tents last night, we walked up and down beneath the magnificent trees, cheroot in mouth and eyes upturned, gazing on the twittering flight of the shells from Outram's Batteries and the Chief's mortars, which dropped like showers of falling stars into the city. . . . Those which burst high in the air, as ours often do, are the prettiest to look at, from a pyrotechnic point of view, if the least effective, though their splinters,

[1] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. p. 305.

scattered from an elevated centre, must radiate with deadly results, search out all the enemy's defences, and fall with murderous effect into the crowded courts." [1] This vertical fire—which was profuse, for the framers of the Siege Train had faith in its efficacy, and had provided it with forty-three mortars—was continued all night, and at dawn was reinforced by the tremendous horizontal fire of the great guns encircling the shrinking lines of the enemy's Easterly boundary with smoke riven with flame, through which speeded iron messengers of death. The sun climbed the heavens; the thermometers registered 90° and 95° in the dark rooms of thick-walled houses, and rose to a sinister height in sun-baked streets, the stones of which radiated heat. The deadly cannonade continued unabated, and on the following day the stately booming of a royal salute was added to its thunder. Jang Bahadur, with his 5000 Gurkhas, had arrived (11th March), and was being received in state in camp by impatient Sir Colin, whose heart was in the critical struggle for the Begam's Palace, then at its height.

The first move of the Plan of Attack had been crowned with success, it is true, but it was not until the British army turned the first line of the enemy's defences—"works exhibiting prodigious labour," says Brigadier Napier in his report—that it realised the magnitude of the task to which it was pledged. The streets leading into the city from the broken Martinière and Dilkusha bridges were commanded by bastions and barricades, and "every building of importance was not only loopholed, but its entrances protected by strong works." "It was ascertained," writes Brigadier Napier, "as one part of the city after another fell into our hands, that it had been the intention of the enemy to offer a very determined resistance, even after their outer lines had been taken. Houses, far in the depths of the com-

[1] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. 306.

mercial parts of the city, were found carefully protected with mud walls and parapets, several of them mounting guns; and, in addition to vast quantities of gunpowder found lying in large buildings, almost every house had its own small supply."[1] "You can scarcely picture to yourself," writes Alex Taylor to Dan Robinson on 15th March, "the pains and trouble with which every house is loopholed, and the immense magnitude of the earth-works thrown up. Fortunately Pandy does not take a comprehensive view of fortifications, and forgets that no system is stronger than its weakest part; and, perhaps more fortunately still, when he has made his works, is afraid to stick to them too long!"

Towards noon, when the walls of the Begam's Palace were giving way beneath the fire of our guns, and the heat was almost unendurable, Taylor—who had been up all night, and, having been directing proceedings on the left since dawn, was very tired—was told by Brigadier Napier that, as at Multan, so now, he had secured him the dangerous honour of leading one of the assaulting Columns.[2]

At about this hour, Mr Russell, with Lieutenant Pat Stewart, R.E., tried to approach the Begam's Palace, "in order to see the fun," but wisely desisted. "We could see the elaborately ornamented gables and entablatures, with minarets and gilt spires," he writes, "but found it convenient to turn into the enclosures and gardens on the right, the walls of which had been pierced for the passage of our men, as the enemy were firing up the road very smartly. Stewart had a narrow escape. A round shot cut a tree just over his head, and the heavy branch all but

[1] Forrest, *op. cit.*, *State Papers*, Appendix F. (Lucknow and Cawnpore), iii. p. iii.

[2] "I owe both my wounds to you, sir," Taylor would say, laughingly, to Lord Napier in after years. "At Multan, but for my own stout resistance, I should have lost my right arm; and at Lucknow it was a near thing with my right leg!"

crushed him as it fell. The gardens were filled with our men—Sikhs and Highlanders—who were in readiness to assault as soon as the breaches were practicable." [1]

The assault was delivered at 3.30 p.m. by three Columns, two against the Palace and one against a loopholed sarai opposite to it. Alex Taylor, who had the general management of the attack, "led" the first Column, and Frederick Maunsell, the second, parties of Royal Engineers and Native Sappers with powder-bags and ladders accompanying them. Brigadier Napier, also, attended by Colonel Harness, who commanded the Royal Engineers, accompanied the Column.

The enemy's position was a strong one—a group of interconnected palaces, courtyards, and gardens, enclosed in high fortified walls, strongly entrenched, and protected in front by a deep ditch. This complex of buildings was defended by more than 5000 men. The latter at first made a brave stand; but, discouraged by previous losses and conscious of playing a losing game, lost heart, and were eventually driven back and back at the point of the bayonet through courts and into buildings, in which—their backs to the wall—they fought desperately. Some of them barricaded themselves into little dark rooms, within which they were seen shooting each other, and from which they were dislodged only by the introduction of live shells into their midst. Others, issuing from their hiding-places after dark, did deadly execution before they were shot down. The place, however, was taken, chiefly by the splendid courage of the 93rd Highlanders and Wilde's Sikhs, who led the way through the breaches.

The enemy's loss was great: some six hundred or seven hundred of their dead were found in the Palace when it was cleared next day, while our own casualties were comparatively insignificant—four officers, and sixty or seventy men, killed

[1] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. p. 307.

or wounded. Among the former, however, were Alex Taylor and Hodson of Hodson's Horse. In Hodson the British army lost an unrivalled leader of Irregular Cavalry, of whose exceptional personal daring General after General had availed himself, and whose reckless gallantry and high spirits were the delight and pride of every Corps with which he served.

Alex Taylor fell soon after the Palace was captured, shot through the leg a little below the knee. "We had got in, and had made good headway," he writes to Dan Robinson, "and I had mounted on to one of the highest pinnacles of the Palace to see what was ahead of us, and what further could be done, when Pandy, from an adjoining house, took advantage of me." Very bitter was his disappointment when he found himself being carried back to the camp in a dooly, leaving all his arrangements for the most interesting phase of the coming struggle in other hands than his own. "Major Taylor of the Engineers is wounded," wrote Colonel John Chalmers at the time, in a published letter ". . . and is a great loss. As in reality he was the man who planned the taking of Delhi, so here . . . he has pushed on in the face of opposition . . . the immediate consequence of his wound being the giving up of a quarter of a mile of street we had got."[1]

Mr Russell visited the Palace next day, and has left a lurid picture of what he saw. Making his way through orange gardens and mango groves, he came to a deep ditch and broad thick parapet, darkened with "patches of blackened blood," and scattered with the debris of the paraphernalia of war. The bodies of Sepoys were being dragged out of the building, and thrown pêle-mêle by coolies into the ditch: "stiffened by death, with outstretched arms and legs, burning slowly in their cotton tunics, those

[1] Letters from Colonel John Chalmers, p. 66.

rent, and shattered figures seemed as if they were about to begin a dance of death. We crossed, *literally*, a ramp of dead bodies, loosely covered with earth," he writes. The gardens and courts were full of soldiers, smoking and chatting under flowering trees, or wandering about in search of loot. The Palace-rooms were littered with shattered chandeliers and mirrors, and the dead bodies of Highlanders and Sikhs. Here and there a Sepoy, to whose cotton clothes a match had been applied, lay like a smouldering torch, while a "light bluish vapoury smoke of disgusting odour formed a veil through which dreadful sights could be dimly seen."

Meanwhile, most interesting moves in the game of war were being made. The Begam's Palace, as has been seen, was the first of a series of palaces and mosques in large enclosures built on either side of a long straight street which, after the course of about half a mile, flanked the Imperial mosque and Palace; this street had been fortified, and, as Mr Russell admirably says, "resembled a long double line of curtains connecting strong bastions enclosed by parapets and defended by Batteries." The Sepoys' idea was that the British army should march down this street, but it was not one which recommended itself to either Sir Colin Campbell or Brigadier Napier. The capture of the Begam's Palace had given the British army a footing *inside* this line of defence. Directed by Robert Napier, the Engineers sapped a way through houses and enclosures —which now formed a *defence* from the enemy's fire—a way which ran some 150 yards to the left of this fortified street, and parallel with it, thus altogether turning the hostile defences in question. "Henceforward," writes Sir Colin Campbell in his report, "Brigadier Napier pushed his approach with the greatest judgment through the enclosures by the aid of the Sappers and the heavy guns, the troops immediately occupying the ground as he advanced, and the

mortars being moved from one position to another as the ground on which they could be placed was won."[1]

It was now Taylor's lot to lie on his back in the hot dull camp. But, though sick at heart at being thus laid low at a critical moment, he had the joy of following the success of his Chief's brilliant Project, to the elaboration of which he had been allowed to contribute, and in the realisation of which he had been allotted so interesting a part. He had, moreover, the pleasure of learning that on the 11th the progress made on the right had equalled that made under his directions on the left, and that this, to his great delight, was largely due to a daring reconnaissance made by three of his Panjab subalterns—Medley, Lang, and Carnegie—thanks to which the Kadam Rasul and the Shah Najaf fell into British hands without a struggle.

The 12th and 13th were Engineer days: *i.e.* days devoted to the sapping and mining of a way to the front, and to the levelling of a road—broad and passable—along which guns and large bodies of troops could be brought up from our base. Our own heavy guns, firing from our rear and from the North of the river, kept down the fire of the enemy's artillery; the working parties, however, were exposed to constant musketry fire from the loopholed houses by which they were overlooked.

On the 14th the Imambara was taken by assault, and on the same day—a day earlier than Sir Colin and General Napier had dared to hope—the enemy's citadel, the Kaisarbagh, fell into our hands, and this, owing to the splendid dash and gallantry of the soldiers engaged. The exultation of the army in the magnificent successes of the day was dimmed, however, by a disastrous contretemps due to an idiosyncrasy of its Chief. Sir Colin treasured the lives of his men as a

[1] Kaye and Malleson, *op. cit.*, iv. p. 270.

miser does his gold, not for their use, but as values in themselves. He could not bring himself to sacrifice them in numbers on any one occasion, even when by doing so he could attain an object of supreme importance, or bring a struggle to a decisive and triumphant issue, and thus—in the long-run—economise life. When the fugitives from the Imambara and the Kaisarbagh were flying before Franks and Napier, an enormous effect might have been produced had Outram, sweeping across the Iron bridge, taken them in flank, and pursued them, disorganised as they were by the terror of defeat, right into the heart of the city; and this he was preparing to do, when he received an order from Sir Colin forbidding him to execute his design, if the passage of the bridge would cost him "the life of a single man." As the rebels had laid a Battery on to the bridge, had covered it with the musketry fire of overlooking loop-holed houses, and were defending it with at least one gun, the price of the movement Outram proposed to make would not have been the life of one man, but that of a multitude of men. He had no choice, therefore, but to desist; the result being the escape from the city of thousands of rebels, and the subsequent year-long guerilla warfare, the avoidance of which had been the keynote of Lord Canning's war-policy.

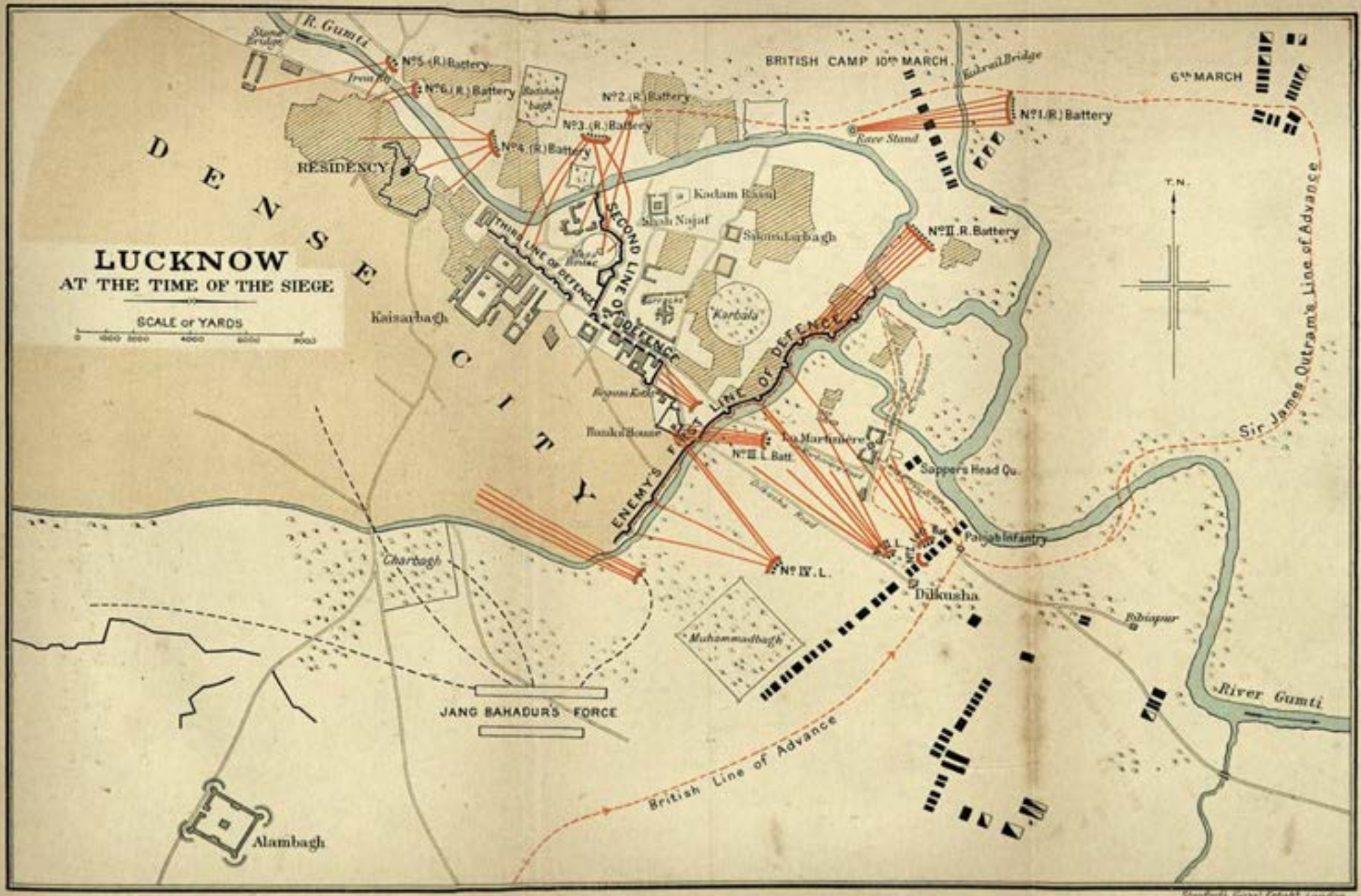
Lucknow might have been besieged during the cold weather *before* the rebels had thrown up their gigantic defences, *before* it had become a focus to which mutineers from every Province had flocked, and *before* the Indian sun had begun to fight on the side of her children. These great defences, and this great concourse of rebels were, however, items in Sir Colin's plan. He looked on the defences as the anvil on which—with his heavy hammer of a great army—he would crush the enemy; the more, the better: every rebel in Lucknow was a danger the less in the country. This policy had been warmly supported by General Napier. Its

efficacy depended, however, not on the mere capture of Lucknow—this was a political necessity, and the success of the British army entrusted with the task a foregone conclusion—but on the destruction of the rebels who had been given time to flock to it in their thousands. Their annihilation was absolutely necessary; it would put an end to trouble in Oudh, and be an object-lesson to all native India. This *desideratum*, however, was not attained, owing to Sir Colin's unwillingness to sacrifice a single life.

This error, followed by the unskilful handling of cavalry on three subsequent occasions, resulted in the escape of some 40,000 rebels, with their leaders, the Begam—"the best man of all"—and the Maulvi of Fyzabad, and the inauguration in Oudh of a long spell of scattered fighting, in the course of which 1572 forts were eventually destroyed and 714 cannon captured—irrespective of those taken in battle—while 1000 of the Englishmen whose lives had been hoarded in Lucknow died in one month—that of May 1858—not of honourable wounds, but of sunstroke, exposure, and disease.

But although the fall of Lucknow was thus shorn of much of its political consequence, the capture of a densely overbuilt city, five miles in circumference, with a warlike population of some 700,000 souls, defended by 40,000 strongly entrenched Sepoys, at a loss—in twenty days' fighting—of 127 men killed and 595 wounded, remains a feat of arms unparalleled in war, a monument to the supremacy of character and science over advantages of position and number.

With the disappearance of Alex Taylor from the scene, we have no right to linger with the captors of Lucknow. Suffice it to say that seven days after the storming of the Begam's Palace the city had fallen absolutely into British hands; and that General Robert Napier commanded a Brigade in the subsequent campaign in Central India with even more than his usual gallantry and ability.


LUCKNOW
AT THE TIME OF THE SIEGE
SCALE OF YARDS
DENSE CITY
R. Gumti
Stone Bridge
Iron Bridge
No5 (R) Battery
No6 (R) Battery
No2 (R) Battery
No3 (R) Battery
No4 (R) Battery
RESIDENCY
BRITISH CAMP 10th MARCH.
6th MARCH
Fakrauli Bridge
No1 (R) Battery
Race Stand
T.N.
Kadam Rasul
Shah Najaf
Sikandarbagh
No II. R. Battery
THIRD LINE OF DEFENCE
SECOND LINE OF DEFENCE
Kaisarbagh
Karbala
ENEMY'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE
Banks House
No III. L. Batt
Sir James Outram's Line of Advance
Sappers Head Qu.
Dilkusha Road
Charbagh
No IV. L.
Dilkusha
Muhammadbagh
Fibiapur
JANG BAHADUR'S FORCE
River Gumti
British Line of Advance
Alambagh

CHAPTER XVIII

CONVALESCENCE

ALEX TAYLOR was put *hors de combat* on the 11th of March, and on the 30th he was still on his back in the Lucknow hospital. "Here I lie," he writes to Mrs Dan Robinson, "in a state of chronic impatience . . . the wound is getting on well. I am afraid the bone is injured, and the large nerve leading to the big toe cut. It is somewhat curious that I have no pain in the wound itself, but my foot worries me a good deal, and I have no power whatever of moving it. In this land of strangers I can hardly tell you how much I have looked forward to your Panjab letters, and how excessively happy I shall be to find myself on my way back."

This wound was a troublesome one, and put an end for ever to his jumping days; from henceforward he always slightly dragged his left foot.

In a letter to "Dan" himself, he alludes humorously to the "honours" which, he had heard, were to fall to his lot: "You will see that the public think it shabby to give me a *mere* (!) majority. What can they give me further? I don't see what it can be, but a C.B.!! Should such an event come to pass, by Jove! how civil you will have to be to 'Major Taylor, C.B.!'" To this letter he adds the following postscript: "Fancy, my poor old sister cried when she saw my name in the papers at home spoken of in connection with the capture of Delhi! Queer bodies, ladies! What an odd way of being jolly!" In reality,

however, he was both touched and delighted by her sensibility, for, like many men who have passed motherless boyhoods, he had a romantic appreciation of home and women.

Letters were a resource; his great pleasure throughout this weary spell of hospital was, however, the success of his Chief's Project. "Napier," he writes to Dan Robinson, "is doing very well indeed as Chief Engineer, and should get no end of honours, as no doubt he will." Second only to this were the successes of his friends, and the good work done by members of his Corps. "Johnnie Watson is just starting for Lahore," he writes, "at which place he is to raise his new regiment. Lucky fellow! I wish I were with him! You see that he is recommended for the Victoria Cross; I sincerely hope he may get it. He is a glorious little fellow." At an earlier date he had written of the same gallant young comrade: "Everyone looks on him as the best cavalry officer in camp; though I should be inclined to except Hodson, who in that line is A1."

Elsewhere he speaks with pleasure of meeting a certain "Comet Stuart"—so called from his refulgent hair and beard—who with his wife and "bright-haired son" had lived through the first siege of the Residency. "He tells me," he writes, "that there was never any deficiency of actual food, though tit-bits were scarce. He spoke most highly," he adds, "of poor George Fulton"—who, the reader will remember, was third in the Chatham year of which Dan Robinson was first, Charles Hutchinson second, and Taylor himself fourth—"so, indeed," he continues, "do the whole of the garrison. They all agree that he was the most important man there, and that they could have better afforded to lose the Brigadier than to lose him. It is a great pleasure to hear that he behaved so well. I hope that his fame has reached his widow's ears." The manner of this officer's death was dramatic. He was inspecting a new Battery, and, lying at

full length in one of the embrasures with a telescope in his hands, had turned his face with a smile towards one of his comrades, saying—"They are just going to fire," when a round shot carried away the back of his head. This was on 14th September 1857.

Another member of his Corps, and an old Panjabi friend, who had recently distinguished himself, was Lieutenant Edward Humphry, Robert Napier's Brigade Major throughout the siege of Lucknow, who had earned a most honourable V.C. soon after the fall of Delhi. It will be remembered that Colonel Gerrard was launched from Delhi against the mutinous Jodhpur Legion early in November. After a fatiguing march across a plain so heavy in dust that it took ten hours to drag the guns twelve miles, the Column he led engaged the enemy outside Narnaul. At a critical moment Edward Humphry, who was acting as aide-de-camp to Colonel Gerrard, seeing that the newly raised Multani Horse were laggard in following their brave Commander, Lieutenant Lind, into close quarters with the enemy, rode stoutly into the midst of the foe, calling on the Multani sowars to follow him; he was unhorsed, and cut down, but, though he received seventeen sabre-cuts, escaped with his life. His determination and the somewhat belated charge of the Multanis achieved their object, and saved the situation. The officers of his Corps were delighted with his gallantry. "Did you ever hear of such luck?" wrote Alex Taylor—to Dan Robinson again—"and he is going to get well!"[1]

Another V.C. earned by a dear and valued comrade, McLeod Innes,[2] was a source of peculiar pleasure to him throughout his life. On the 23rd February 1858, General

[1] He never really recovered from these wounds and from the illnesses contracted during the Mutiny, and died an officer of Pensioners at Chelsea Hospital.

[2] The late Lieutenant-General J. J. McLeod Innes, V.C., C.B., R.E. (late Bengal).

Franks, who was fighting his way to Lucknow at the head of a mixed force of Europeans, and Jang Bahadur's Nepalese (5500 strong), came upon the enemy at Sultanpur, in a position which, though exceedingly strong, could be turned. Under cover of a feigned frontal attack, he succeeded in pushing a considerable force behind them, and in attacking them in rear and flank. Lieutenant McLeod Innes—who had already done splendid service at Lucknow during the first defence of the Residency—was riding ahead of the foremost ranks of skirmishers, when he noticed that the enemy, thrown into confusion by this unexpected manœuvre, having abandoned one gun, had fallen back on a second piece in its rear, with which they were preparing to rake the oncoming British Column. Without a moment's hesitation, he put spurs to his horse, and, riding up to the mouth of this second gun, succeeded in shooting the mutineer serving it before he was able to apply the port-fire, and then—maintaining his post, although the target for a hundred marksmen in the neighbouring cover—actually prevented the rebel Artillerymen from re-manning the piece, holding them up until it was taken by the rush of his comrades, for which he had not long to wait. Dangers thus met are sources of rejoicing.

On the battlefield, on which the envoys of death may at any moment net their prey, men's hearts beat high; a certain wild joy is the note of the occasion. But things are different in the hospital, where the disabled lie quietly in narrow cots, doctors move softly to and fro, and the air is heavy with the sinister odour of anæsthetics. There Death holds a levée the grim significance of which is obvious.

Into the ward where Taylor lay, two of his brother officers were carried on the 17th—Captain Clarke and Lieutenant Elliot Brownlow—shattered, blackened, unrecognisable. After Sir James Outram had taken the Jama

Masjid, nine cart-loads of gunpowder were found hidden in a court behind it. Houses were blazing in the neighbourhood; it being obviously all-important that this dangerous material should be removed immediately, it was decided to fling it into a deep well in the vicinity. Captain Clarke and Elliot Brownlow—the latter serving as a volunteer—were superintending this operation, when one of the powder-bags, striking the side of the well, ignited, and shot skyward in a column of flame; in a moment the whole convoy was a line of fire, smoke, and thunder, and when men could hear and see again it was found that the two officers, sixteen European Sappers, and thirty Sikhs had been either killed or desperately injured.[1]

The sight of his comrades thus undone was very grievous to Taylor, shaken as he was himself by overwork and pain. Captain Clarke was an acquaintance only; but he knew him as an able and efficient officer, and had witnessed his boyish disappointment when put in charge of the men directed to repair the Dilkusha bridge on the 10th and 11th, instead of being included in the party which he himself led, and was destined to bore and storm its way from Banks's House to the Kaisarbagh and Residency. The young Royal Engineer had only just reached the front, when the hand of Death tossed him aside for ever. Russell describes him as he saw him first in February,

[1] Arthur Lang, who was serving as Robert Napier's Orderly Officer that day, and had been sent to the rear to bring Pioneers up to help in the execution of this "ugly job," writes: "Before I reached the scene of operations I saw the cloud of smoke and heard the thunder of the explosion. I dashed forward to see what had happened, and found the blackened ground strewed with the bodies of the poor Royal Engineers, who had pushed on unknown to me, wretched men whom I could not recognise; but they knew me, and called out —'Mr Lang, for God's sake shoot me.' Nowhere could I find Elliot, but, as doolies were carrying away the still living men, I followed the line till I heard him calling me, and remained with him till he died, a hero and a true Christian to the last. That was a sad day."

"a tall, deep-chested, fine young fellow, blue-eyed, tawny-maned, the old Scandinavian type, full of energy, 'dying to see service,' hurrying to the front with a wound, received in the first encounter he had had with the enemy, not quite healed"; and as he saw him last, a month later—"Poor Clarke," he writes, ". . . the most dreadful object I ever beheld . . . burnt, black, covered with blistered skin from head to foot. . . . But he was at peace, poor fellow, and, great as his agony must have been, he carried none of it out of the world, for his face, at the moment of his death, wore a calm and peaceful expression."[1]

Elliot Brownlow, on the other hand, was an old friend, and, latterly, earlier ties had been re-knit by common experiences—the two men had fought side by side at Fatehpur Sikri, Khasganj, Patiali, and Mainpuri, and Brownlow had been Taylor's right-hand man throughout the proceedings of which Banks's House was the centre. All three officers were Irishmen—Clarke and Brownlow actually hailing from the same neighbourhood. Elliot and his brother Henry, both Bengal Engineers, had been educated by their uncle, Colonel Close of Drumbanagher Castle, County Armagh, a typical old Irish country-house, not far from which rose the more stately but not more beautiful home of their cousin, Lord Lurgan; while Captain Clarke's father and his uncle, both in the service, lived in the vicinity of the township of Lurgan. They were friends as lads, and in death they were not divided. To Elliot Brownlow the *Times* correspondent pays the following tribute: "Of Captain Brownlow there is but one opinion in this army—that he was in the very first rank of devoted, brave, and zealous officers, and that his has been a serious loss to the service and to his country."

When Taylor knew what had occurred, he had himself carried to his friend's bedside. Towards the end the

[1] Russell, *op. cit.*, i. p. 158.

sufferer turned his bandaged face towards his comrade: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," he murmured. The dying man's anguish was great, but he bore it without complaint. The doctor pressed an opiate upon him, but this, this Ulsterman, this scion both of courtiers and of a good old Puritan stock, waived sternly aside: "I will not go drugged into the presence of my God," he said; and so—stoutly and consciously—drank his divinely-given draught of pain to the end.

Next day two pits were dug in the garden of the Kaisarbagh, and there the charred remains of officers and men were buried together. "It was a sad and affecting spectacle," writes Mr Russell, who was present. "The clenched hands and feet of some of the poor fellows protruded through the blankets in which their bodies were sewn, but, in mercy to the living, the faces of the dead were concealed. One of the officers was buried in a rude coffin made by his men. Brigadier Napier, of the Bengal Engineers, and every officer of the Corps of Engineers who could get away from duty assisted at the ceremony. A party of Sappers and Miners with reversed arms followed the bodies to the graves. . . . As we passed silently on, it was piteous to hear the cries of one of the burnt men, who lay in a tent close to the spot where his comrades were lying. . . . There hobbled out some of the men who had escaped the fatal violence of the explosion, but who still bore the marks of its severity on faces and hands, to join in the procession; and it was affecting to see one of these poor fellows trying, with crippled hands, to gather up some of the mould of the garden, that he might pay the last tribute to a departed friend—"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

The rôle played by gunpowder in the Engineers' day's work was a fruitful source of danger to the members of the Corps.

Not many months previously, the demon of fire had claimed another victim from among the men who professed to have bound it to their service—Duncan Home, V.C., who lost his life shortly after he had blown in the Kashmir Gate, and had been granted the honour of blowing open the Lahore Gate of the Palace at Delhi. After Brigadier Greathed's victory at Bulandshahr three young officers—Duncan Home, Arthur Lang, and a linesman—were left at Malaghar with two Companies of Sappers to blow up the defences of the deserted fort. Having spent three days there, and having got as much amusement out of the proceedings as schoolboys do out of 5th-of-November fireworks, they were on the point of bringing the work to an end and returning to camp. Duncan Home, always gay and laughter-loving, was in great feather; he had heard that morning (1st October 1857) that the rôle he had played at the Kashmir Gate was to be rewarded by a V.C., and his spirits were boisterous. He had exploded five mines with his own hands, and, having shouted a "look out," was advancing with a portfire in his hands to explode the last and largest, when sudden thunder rent the air and a cloud of dust and smoke arose. His friends who were watching from a distance rushed, horror-stricken, to the spot; fifteen yards from it, Duncan Home, V.C.—the brave and light-hearted—lay shattered, both his legs broken, one in two places, and one arm nearly torn away—dead, mercifully. To survive the dangers of the Kashmir Gate only to die while demolishing a deserted fort—such are the mysterious awards of fate.

All things come to an end, and so did those weary weeks in the hospital at Lucknow. April saw Alex Taylor safely housed at Lahore by his old friend, "Charlie Hutch." He was very ill, however, and, though longing

for Panjab air and Panjab friends, it was Thursday, 1st July before Mrs Henry Graham was able to make the following entry in her diary: "Henry went off to Ancora to meet dear old Musha, and brought him back with him, one of the best pleasures we have had for many a day." For the next few months Taylor's name is seldom absent from the pages of this good friend's diary. At first he is often "down with fever," or "very seedy," but the barometer rises steadily; he soon "drives and dines" with his friends, then "bathes with Henry," in the swift Kabul river, near the bridge of boats he had cut in the spring of the previous year to check the march of the mutinous 55th Native Infantry, and, finally, the little party moves to Murree, where Taylor goes to his own house, and the Graham-party to Dan Robinson's.[1] After a time, "Henry, Dan, and Musha" go salmon-fishing in the Mahl, but the latter is not allowed to play in a football match, Addiscombe and Haileybury against The World, which took place at the end of the season. The World won, but the vanquished gave a ball in honour of the victors, at which they in their turn swept the field; or so they maintained.

There was a good deal of talk in those days at Rosenheim—the Robinsons' flower-embowered bungalow—for it was not Taylor only, nor even the other convalescents from the front, who had tales to tell. Mrs Robinson, and Mrs Graham too, had had experiences which might have been serious enough, for they had lived through the extremely dangerous attack made on Murree by two neighbouring hill-tribes in the September of the previous year. "My little baby and I," writes Mrs Graham, "were staying at Rosenheim with Dan and Janey Robinson and their three children, the youngest only a few weeks old. I happened to be lying awake one night, when I heard a

[1] Mrs Robinson was Henry Graham's sister.

horse gallop up to the back entrance; and then a voice—George Battye's[1]—saying softly: 'Dan! Dan!' I sprang up and knocked at Dan's door to arouse him. He was up and out in a moment; then I heard the two men speaking to each other in undertones in the dining-room. Janey came out and said, 'I *must* hear what they are saying.' So we *listened at the door!* We heard George Battye say, 'I think there is nothing in it, but as you are surrounded by women and children, I just thought I would put you on your guard.' The house was isolated on a plateau or spur, with the forest behind, and the valley, splendid view, and Kuldana road in front—the latter sunk out of sight. Dan went out at once and posted his Gurkha guard at various points overlooking the road.

When he returned, we made him tell us just what George Battye had said. It appeared that the wife of one of his servants—a hill woman—had come in, and had said that two or three villages had determined to make a combined attack on Rosenheim that night, and that they would be led by Dan's trusted armour-sergeant, Faiz Bux, a Delhi man, an extremely clever mechanician, and a great favourite with all the officers. Dan laughed at the idea, but took the precaution of ordering the janpan-bearers to place our janpans in the veranda, and to sleep beside them. We then went back to our rooms. I dressed partially, and then lay down. Two hours later I heard shots, and rushed to Janey's room. Dan had gone, having told Janey to be off immediately to Lady Lawrence's house, which was a mile distant and connected with Rosenheim by a very steep hillpath. We wrapped up the children and put on some extraordinary garments ourselves, but, on going out, found that the janpanis had vanished, and that it was raining heavily.

[1] One of the many Battye brothers, several of whom were killed in action.

Three 'bearers' appeared; two of the former took Janey and her babies in one janpan, while I, carrying my baby and accompanied by my bearer, Kalideen—a new servant—prepared to walk and run beside it. The way was wet, steep, and slippery, and I could not keep up. Kalideen begged to be allowed to carry baby, and as Janey would wait for me, I thought it my duty to allow him to do so. I gave her to him; my heart sank when he disappeared with the child into the darkness. We heard shots fired below in quick succession. I was very thirsty, and drank out of puddles as we went along. We met two young officers, and sent them down to help Dan. I also turned aside to tap at the windows of the house of some German missionaries to beg them to get up and follow us to Lady Lawrence's. I overtook Janey near Government House. The first sight I saw on entering it was my little Rosie placidly eating gingerbreads on Lady Lawrence's lap. The room was full of fugitives—ladies, in the oddest clothes and head-dresses, some of them very frightened. Janey and I were in great anxiety about Dan, who came in at about 2 a.m. for a moment to allay poor Janey's fears." Next day the ladies were allotted quarters in the barracks. In the course of a few days the whole party returned to Rosenheim, and the incident was at an end.

But what had Dan Robinson been doing while his women-folk made their way uphill? Having visited his Gurkha outposts and given them orders, he and a Gurkha orderly established themselves—well armed and well provided with ammunition—in a little summer-house at the head of a steep pathway which connected the Rosenheim plateau with the Kuldana road. From this point of vantage and shelter, a shadow creeping along the road was dimly discernible through the darkness and rain. This proved to be a crowd of men, who halted at the base of the Khud, and,

as Dan Robinson expected, began to swarm up the Rosenheim pathway. The course of this pathway was sheltered from view until within a few yards of the plateau. At this point it emerged from behind a rock, which so encroached on it that it was only open to men moving in single file; it was, moreover, commanded by the rose-laden summer-house. When the foremost of the stormers rounded the rock, Dan Robinson fired; the man fell. He fired again, and again, his orderly loading and re-loading his weapons; many men fell. A determined rush would have put an end to the struggle, but that determined rush was not made. The enemy fell back, got rid of their impedimenta in dead and wounded, rallied, and came on again; with the same result. This they did several times, but none of them succeeded in gaining the plateau.

A few attempts were made to "rush" the station from other points, but all failed; the reason why, appeared later. Rosenheim lay between the Gurkha lines and the Gurkha firing-range; for the convenience of the regiment, Dan Robinson had ceded it a large room in his compound, in which muskets and ammunition were stored; this was protected by a Gurkha guard, and was in the especial charge of the Delhi armourer, Faiz Bux. This gentleman—so it transpired afterwards—had arranged to lead the rebels to this depôt, which he promised they should find unlocked; when they had overpowered the Gurkha guard and armed themselves, he confidently expected that the station—occupied as it was by women, children, and convalescents—would be at their mercy. Dan Robinson and his orderly in the rose-arbour were items with which he had failed to reckon. They knocked the bottom out of his plot.

The leading hillsmen in the attack on Rosenheim were armed, but not so their followers; indeed, muskets

as loot were the bait which had attracted them to Murree. When they found that their midnight attack was no surprise to the Sahibs, they scented treachery, and, having no fancy for walking unarmed into an ambush, melted away from the hillside like snow on a spring day. The attack was a fiasco; the firing from Rosenheim put the whole station on the alert; the Gurkhas turned out, and the attempted raid by the second hill-tribe on the other side of the station was met by armed men and easily repulsed. Thanks to Dan Robinson's promptitude, the only sufferers in the affair were the tribesmen—whose villages were burnt—and Faiz Bux—who escaped to Delhi, where he was subsequently hanged. No official notice was ever taken of the Horatius-like gallantry which had saved the situation on this occasion; nor did anyone look for it, least of all Dan Robinson. He had often gone further at considerable expense to lie up for a tiger; a whole hill-tribe was merely bigger and more exciting game—a point of view symptomatic of the healthy state of the body politic of which he was part.

And so the summer slipped away, amid scented fir-woods, picnics, laughter, and much good-fellowship; much serious conversation, also, especially among the men, and long, long thoughts.

At last the sun rose again on the 14th of September. Many were the dinners given that evening in honour of those who had stormed and taken Delhi. Taylor, in the hospital at Lucknow, had felt that a Brevet Majority and a C.B. were rewards almost too great for his services—he had but faced the day's work as best he could. His country, however, thought otherwise, and his friends that night had the pleasure of drinking with three times three to the good health of "Musha," who had left them in 1857 a subaltern — plain "Mr Taylor, of the Lahore-

Peshawar road"—but who returned in 1858 "Lieutenant Colonel Taylor, C.B."

What experiences were packed between these two dates! An Empire, shaken to its foundations; a desperate crisis—the outcome of incompatible ideals and of the Briton's unconsciousness of feelings and prejudices not his own—an irrevocable disaster, averted, not by intelligence, but by character. And the price: the greatest and noblest India held, gone! Thousands of the young and brave—dead, or shattered in health. What an army of the splendid dead—Henry Lawrence, Henry Havelock, James Neill, still and silent in their graves at Lucknow; John Nicholson at Delhi, with some thousands of his comrades about him; the Ridge, sacred to the memory of those who fought and died upon it; at Cawnpore, the Well; at Lucknow, the Residency; at Arrah, the Little House; and at every station from Peshawar to Calcutta, its rows of newly-made graves, and, almost always, its heroic legend. And beyond these, the yawning abyss into which had disappeared 150,000 trusted Sepoys.

But overhead the banner of England still waved intact—the old red, white, and blue—and beneath it stood its bodyguard of trusted sons, men whose metal had been lately tested in the blast-furnace of sudden and desperate danger.

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CHAPTER XIX

MARRIAGE

EARLY in the spring of 1858, Taylor sighted the white cliffs of England after an absence of fifteen eventful years. He had left his country an inexperienced boy; he returned a distinguished and war-worn soldier, on whose courage and ability at a crucial moment Imperial issues had depended.

He landed at Newhaven, bound for London, and eventually for Dublin, but was forced by circumstances to spend the night at Lewes. While waiting, much bored, at the little provincial inn, he studied a map of the South Coast Railway which adorned its walls, and noticed that his train, next day, would pass Battle, the post town—so he remembered—for Ashburnham, where Mrs Henry Graham's father and mother lived. Recollecting his parting promise to bring them the latest news of their far-away eldest daughter, and thinking that he was not likely to be in Sussex again, he determined to break his journey, and to pay his respects to them immediately. He sat down directly, therefore, to pen a letter asking permission to call. The following morning saw him jolting along the muddy road—which rose and fell in gradients which he would not have tolerated in the Panjab—connecting Battle station with Ashburnham Vicarage.

A visit from a "Delhi hero" was a great event to the inmates of the country-house which was his goal, for the circle in which they moved was almost monotonously "civil," and consisted chiefly of country-squires and country-parsons.

Colonel Taylor was, moreover, almost an old friend: Mrs Munn's brother, Colonel Godfrey Greene, had written of him in olden days; Mrs Graham's letters were full of his doings; and they had all followed his movements with breathless interest, first at Delhi, and then at Lucknow.

The house-party consisted of Mr and Mrs Munn and their three daughters. Mr Munn,[1] Vicar of Ashburnham and Rector of Penhurst, was a typical old-fashioned country-clergyman—educated at Harrow and Oxford; interested in archæology and genealogies; hot-tempered, warm-hearted, and generous; the father and friend of his rustic "poor people," the ruling, helping, and tipping of whom was his main life-work. The memory of his hospitality, his half-crowns and sixpences, his kindness to dissenters, and his indulgent care for sinners still lives—after the lapse of half a century—in the neighbourhood of his cure, and there are still old Sussex labourers who, if his name be mentioned, take their pipes from their mouths, smile, and begin a slow tale, with the invariable prelude: "Old Muss' (Master) Munn, he guv' me. . . ."

Mr Munn was an Anglo-Saxon,[2] Mrs Munn belonged to other races. She was an Irishwoman, one of the Kilkenny Greenes,[3] and had French as well as Irish blood in her veins,

[1] The Rev. John Read Munn.

[2] John Read Munn was descended from a certain "John Mun, merchant of Hackney and London," who was granted the privilege of bearing arms by Claranceux in 1562, and was the father of Thomas Mun, a Director of the E. I. Company, a distinguished political economist, and author of *A Discourse of Trade from England unto the East Indies*, and of *England's Treasure by Forrain Trade* (published 1664). Both these rare books are of extreme interest to the student of early political economy.

[3] Mrs Munn's grandfather—John Greene of Kilcronach (Co. Kilkenny), Kilmanahan Castle (Co Waterford), and Moorestown Castle (Co. Tipperary), High Sheriff of Co. Kilkenny in 1766, and husband of Olympia Langrishe—was one of the founders and promoters of linen manufacture in the South of Ireland. He brought twelve families from the North and settled them on his property for this purpose, and is described as having been otherwise of

her paternal grandmother being Olympia Langrishe, great great grand-daughter of the beautiful Olympe du Plessis, wife of Major Hercules Langrishe, Carver to Queen Henrietta Maria, who, in spite of his post at Court, joined the Parliamentarians, raised a troop of Horse, and was active in preventing Charles I. from arresting the "five members" in 1641. Her social gifts justified the admixture of blood in her veins; their natural sphere was not a country parsonage, but a Parisian salon. Her wit and charm were not altogether wasted, however: she was the light of her home, the pride of her parishioners, and the delight of a country-side, which numbered the Bunsens and the Hares among its inhabitants. Shyly supported by her elder girls, who were just "out," she gave her daughter's friend a warm welcome, which was enthusiastically seconded by the school-room child, Rosalie.

Alex Taylor was a shy man—his lines had fallen to him in rough places to which ladies rarely penetrated—and was quite alarmed to find himself the centre of a bevy of charming faces and big crinolines.

great use to the County. He was the grandson of a certain Captain Godfrey Greene, "a 49" officer, to whom Moorestown Castle and considerable domains were granted by letters patent in 1678. On the death, in 1883, of his great grandson, John Greene of Kilcronach—formerly of the 7th Dragoon Guards and M.P. for the County of Kilkenny—the family estates in County Kilkenny and County Tipperary were sold under the Incumbered Estates Act, their net rental being a nominal £2500 a year and their incumbrances £39,946—a typical Irish property. As this John Greene was in favour of Repeal, Tenant-Right, and Disestablishment, he was known by the country people in his county as "honest John Greene." He founded a printing office in London, and devoted much time and money to the improvement of logotypes. A man of charming address and sincerity, he was one of Mrs Munn's favourite cousins. These Irish Greenes are believed to have been a younger branch of the Greenes of Greene Norton, who received the advowson of Buckton (Northamptonshire) in 1202; one of whom, Sir Henry Greene, was Lord Chief Justice of England in 1361–65, and the last representative of whom, Matilda Greene, married Sir Thomas Parr, whose sister, Katherine, was the sixth wife of Henry VIII.

This visit was full of local colour. On arrival, Colonel Taylor naturally sent in his visiting-card ; this consisted of a piece of white writing-paper, neatly cut into the required shape, with his name written on it—a Panjab habit, born of the lack of shops, and much relished by his hosts as redolent of the wilds. So also was his dress. This was neat and well cut, the work of a native darzi reproducing that of a Bond Street tailor ; the pieces of which it was made were, however, turned outwards at the seams and herring-boned. This detail was, of course, corrected in the new outfit which awaited the traveller in London, though it is doubtful whether he ever noted the change.

All were delighted with the visitor—an exceedingly alert, strongly-built, soldierly-looking man of middle height, very thin, parched, and sunburnt, his hands, indeed, almost black, his eyes blue and steady, his conversation gay and vivid. Mrs Munn naturally questioned him on his late Indian experiences, of which he gave an interesting account ; but, when she alluded to an appreciative notice of his services which had lately appeared in the *Times*, he so visibly shrank and stiffened that she changed the subject hastily, with a painful sense of having blundered into a solecism. This visit was but a short one, as there were trains to catch and the Holyhead steamer to bear in mind. But it was not the last. The agreeable caller returned, more than once, brought his sister with him, stayed for longer and longer visits, and, finally, persuaded one of Harriette Graham's younger sisters to promise to return to India with him.

His leave, meantime, was drawing to an end. He had returned home on eighteen months' furlough only, and was far from well. "He was still suffering from fever and ague," writes one of the Ashburnham party, "but was very bright and alert between the attacks, which he took as

a matter of course." His health and his engagement made him anxious to convert this eighteen months into two years. With this end in view he turned to John Lawrence for assistance, assistance which was effectively given. Lord Lawrence, then in England, wrote to Sir Robert Montgomery on the subject, and the latter, thinking that the terms in which he did so would please Alex Taylor's future bride, sent her a copy of his letter.

It ran as follows :—

"India House,
"*1st November* 1859.

"My dear Montgomery,—Colonel Taylor wants to remain at home until October or November next. By so doing he will have to vacate his appointment as Superintendent of the Peshawar Road. I do for him what I would do for few men. I write to you to help him, if you can possibly manage it. Next to John Nicholson, Alex Taylor was the man who mainly contributed to the taking of Delhi. He is therefore entitled to our assistance. You might easily keep the appointment open, letting Major Robertson act. I am sure that if you put the matter properly to Lord Canning, he will concur and assent.—Yours affectly
"John Lawrence.

"*P.S.*—Taylor will remain at home on sick certificate. He suffered a good deal from exposure and his wound."

Thanks to this friend's kind intervention, Colonel Taylor's application was granted.

The young couple were married in 1860, on May Day—a day then universally observed as a festival of spring, and generally graced in Sussex by a May queen, May garlands, and a full ritual of rustic observances. The ceremony took place in the old church attached to Ashburnham Place, which then enshrined the blood-stained shirt bequeathed by

Charles I. to his faithful Gentleman-in-Waiting, Mr John Ashburnham, who attended him on the scaffold.

It was an idyllic country wedding, at which "Miss Lily's" cottage friends were well represented. There were the school children from Lady Ashburnham's School—no Board School in those days—the girls with polished faces and clean print frocks bashfully dropping curtseys and spring flowers, while the boys pulled awkward forelocks. Then there were the much-respected "Dames," who lived in Lady Ashburnham's Almshouses—no places of shame, like the modern workhouse, but the Hampton Court of Lord Ashburnham's faithful tenantry. The choir was there—naturally—and also the village band; the farmers and labourers too, in clean white-embroidered smocks, their faces like apples, together with their hard-worked, well-washed wives, all smiling and crying, and very conscious that this was a great occasion.

There was, of course, the usual attendance of mere friends and relations, but it was on the whole a greatly relished parishioners' festival. When the slow, shrewd, deep-hearted Sussex folk went to bed that night, they were fairly dazed with recollections of visionary white-veiled figures, carriages driving to and fro, disgorging "gentry" in wonderful clothes, a cake, cut with a sword which was the centre of legends, speeches, healths, tears, slippers, and rice; and, finally—flower-starred country lanes lined with smock-frocks, and curtseying women and school children. The joys of that long eventful day were, moreover, inlaid on the romantic melancholy of the thought that Miss Lily was embarking for dangerous foreign lands inhabited by "blacks," missionaries, and soldiers, who lived on terms which were sometimes strained. No element of pleasure, therefore, was lacking.

CHAPTER XX

BACK IN INDIA

On the 29th October 1860 Colonel and Mrs Taylor arrived at Calcutta, where the latter, who was a bad sailor and had been prostrated by the heat—95° F. in the Red Sea—was thankful to be received by her sister, Mrs Graham. She and her husband had not come out alone; for Alex Taylor, before leaving India in 1858, had invited his elder sister to return with him; and, as both he and his wife were too quixotic to disappoint her, this invitation was never cancelled, and the girl-bride began her married life in India with a *ménage à trois*, an arrangement which lasted seven years.

Close on their arrival came a big dinner of sixty covers at Lord Canning's, and a few days later a ball, also at Government House—great events, these, to the country-girl. "All I can recall of these large gatherings," she wrote in after years, "is an indefinite remembrance of size, numbers, and gay colours, the bright uniforms striking a note to which I was unaccustomed, and a very definite remembrance of Lord Napier's great kindness and gentleness to his subaltern's shy young wife. He devoted the greater part of the evening to making me happy in this concourse of strangers, for Alex was told off to look after various ladies, and had other social duties to perform."

After a busy month at Calcutta—the fortifications of which Colonel Taylor had had orders to inspect—the trio

started by train for Raniganj, some 120 miles distant, whence they launched themselves on their long 1400-mile drive by "dawk" to Pindi. The driving was done between dusk and dawn, some sixty or seventy miles being covered during the night, while the passengers, stretched at full length on folded rezais and abundant pillows, slept comfortably enough, being young. Their way at first ran along the road constructed by "Cousin George"[1] thirty years previously, and was that followed in 1858 by Neill and Havelock: it ran through Benares, into which they passed by the bridge of boats spanning the Ganges, the first boat-bridge Mrs Taylor had seen; and most romantic, she thought it—a fitting prelude to the amazing city of pagodas, ghats, and many-coloured crowds which they visited under the auspices of their host, Brigadier-General George Campbell, R.H.A., Henry Graham's uncle.

Their next resting-place was under the shadow of the great mediæval-looking fortress of Allahabad. Then came Cawnpore, with its sacred well, sealed by a heavy stone, but not yet consecrated by the presence of the great white angel which now stands in the midst of the guarded and tended garden into which no native of India is allowed to enter, and which was placed there on the initiative of an officer of Engineers of whom his Corps is justly proud—Colonel Sir Henry Yule.

Early in December the travellers reached Agra, visited its red sandstone fort, its Palace, and its Taj Mahal; and there the two ladies made the acquaintance of Alex Taylor's dearest and oldest friend, Dan Robinson, and of his wife also—Henry Graham's sister. From Agra they pressed on through Meerut to Delhi, where their tents were pitched in the compound of Hindu Rao's House, in which their hosts, Captain and Mrs John Watson, were actually living. The

[1] Thomson of Ghazni.

old house—a mass of scars and wounds—the breached and battered walls of Delhi rising over trees which had been lopped and decapitated by the fire of our cannons, and the city itself—still littered with debris—testified to the reality of the struggle, which seemed, so the young Englishwoman felt, to have passed tracelessly away like an evil dream. "How strange it was to be sleeping in peace and security in tents *on the Ridge!*" she wrote: "to be surrounded by natives, all happy, and content, and anxious to serve us, and to feel no fear of them! . . . I think Mrs Watson and I, as we looked at our brave husbands, and felt that they were safe, and yet had never spared themselves, were very proud, and thankful, and happy wives." "Before leaving," she adds, "I noted some odd-looking things like concrete pillows, which seemed to have worked upward through the sandy floor of the tent. These turned out to be sand-bags, part of the temporary defences of the Ridge. The hand which had laid them was probably no more, but there they were, thrusting themselves between the rugs on the floor of our comfortable tent! A silent reminder!"

What could have been of more absorbing interest than to linger in Delhi with such guides as Alex Taylor and Captain Watson? but this, alas, was impossible, for leave was drawing to an end; the trio moreover had been asked to join Sir Robert Montgomery's large Christmas house-party at Lahore. They pressed on, therefore, and ere long found themselves in big luxurious tents pitched among the palms and orange trees of the Government House gardens. Although the next few days were a whirl of gaiety, Sir Robert found time to show Mrs Taylor the marvels of the capital of the Panjab—Ranjit Singh's palaces and tomb, the great mosques, etc., and also the parade ground at Meean Meer, the scene of the famous disarmament parade which followed the equally famous ball. She found it difficult to

realise—as she was carried along in a carriage drawn by swift *camels*—that it was the prompt and daring action of her urbane host which had so recently saved Lahore, and probably Northern India from the horrors enacted in Delhi, Cawnpore, and Oudh.

No sooner were these festivities over than the three resumed their travels. But the journey now took on a very different complexion. The young wife learned, with an amused shock, that her husband's life was regulated by something other than her wishes, for now Taylor was back on his Road, and work had begun in real earnest. There was no longer anything approximate about the hours of starting or of meals; rigid punctuality was the order of the day. The ladies drove in a buggy, but the Engineer rode. Every mile of the way was closely inspected; no sooner were lunch and dinner over in the one little white-washed sitting-room in the roadside rest-house, than the one big deal table it contained was cleared, the "daftar box" produced, and he and his subordinates bent anxious heads over plans and estimates, while the ladies were free to sit in corners in discreet silence, or, if they preferred it, on the boxes in their bedrooms.

Taylor was now living at high pressure. The Road was his passion—an hereditary passion—the roads of Scotland and Ireland had embroidered his grandfather's life with romance, the railways of Ireland had haunted his father like an obsession, and now through his own life ran the alluring vision of the shining metalled Road, well watered and shady, cleft by him across the Panjab. This passion stood in the way of his professional advancement. He had just made himself a considerable reputation as a military engineer, had received two brevets, and had risen from the rank of a Lieutenant to that of Colonel during the course of little more than a year, a most exceptional rate of promotion. These

were barren honours, however, unless he pursued a military career. On landing at Calcutta, he had been offered two important military appointments, either of which it would have been to his interest to accept; but to have done so would have involved the abandonment of his Road, the thing he had initiated and meant to carry out from start to finish. To desert it for preferment seemed to him almost on a par with deserting his wife for a richer woman.

The spring of 1861, therefore, found him very happily travelling back to the post from which John Lawrence had sent him to Delhi four years previously. The course he elected to take was not the royal road to advancement; it was the road, however, always instinctively trodden by the public servants who are the back-bone of a service and of a country. He had learned at Calcutta that some of his pet projects had been abandoned during his four years' absence —the tunnel North of the Jhelum, for instance—and that some plans of which he disapproved had been put in hand —a tunnel under the Indus, for example—and it was with delight that he now took the reins of the concern into his strong and autocratic hands.

By the time his wife had reached the little flowery chalet at Murree, and her eyes had swept across the deep-blue pine-filled valley to the distant Himalayan snows flaming at sundown against the far horizon,[1] she had realised the place taken in her husband's life by the Road along which she had driven Northward. She knew what delight it gave him to think of the rôle that it was destined to play in the civilisation of the Panjab; she was aware of the pleasure with which he thought of the humble native trader journeying along it in perfect safety, secure of finding at noon and nightfall his shaded well of pure water and the bunnia who would satisfy his simple needs; and of the European, driving swiftly across

[1] The higher peaks of the Pir Panjal—Thatta Kuti, 15,524 feet.

country which had always been difficult and at times impassable, with Government-carriage at his command, and the certainty of a bungalow, bath, meal, and bed at the day's end. This was in time of peace; it was in time of war, however, that the uses of the Road which linked the military posts of the Panjab into a strategic whole would be most apparent.

He had ridden with Sir Walter Gilbert's army of pursuit from Gujarat to Peshawar along the old Sikh tracks, and the suffering then endured by men and beasts, especially by the artillery horses, was still fresh in his mind. It was a joy to him to realise the swiftness with which the British army would be mobilised and the rapidity with which it would move along his wide smooth highway, with its easy gradients, especially designed to facilitate the transit of heavy artillery, and its big well-watered military encamping grounds, with their sarais, storehouses of corn and hay, and every facilitation of commissariat arrangements that foresight could suggest. These were considerations of utility. His were also, however, the more recondite joys of the artist and expert. There was hardly a mile of the Road which did not contain some obstacle triumphantly overcome: some troublesome ravine bridged, some "Tiger Cub" bridled, some capricious spreading river forced to follow a definite course, some quicksand steadied and compelled to bear a weight—and all this with inadequate machinery, untrained labour, and a master—John Lawrence—who was constantly thundering the words, "Economy," "Reduce estimates."

But although Taylor worked on this Road for two decades, and watched it with a father's eye until the end of his Indian service; and though, throughout this long spell of years, he enjoyed the loyal support of a splendid staff of assistants, it was not given him to see the completion of his undertaking: the task was too great to be compressed into

any working life-time. Long reaches of it, however, were in use as early as 1857, and when he eventually left the Panjab, though some reaches of it were not absolutely complete, and a few rivers were still only temporarily bridged—the Indus, for instance—the whole unbroken length of the Road was open from end to end.

Nowadays, the completion of any large section of a public work is marked as a day of general rejoicing: the Chiefs of the Province—military and civil—hasten to the spot; the new road, or canal, or whatever it may be, is inaugurated by speeches and the firing of cannon, supplemented by bunting and champagne, and by the bestowal of honours where honour is due; often a touching ceremony, in which the gaunt, fever-eaten figures of the makers of the great Public Utility fêted that day contrast pathetically with the sleek well-being of those who bestow the medals and ribbons with which a grateful country marks its approval of those who minister to its prosperity. But in those austere days even this meagre mead of recognition was reprobated, and by none more sternly than by Alex Taylor, both for himself and his subordinates. As far as he was concerned, the old Hofwyl training still held its own; to him the real reward of good work was the good work itself—"the work is to the worker, and comes back most to him." He and his Staff were public servants whose profession it was to fight for peace in time of war, and, the war over, to dignify peace with splendid works. As they were, moreover, gentlemen who, as such, did their duty to the top of their ability—*ça va sans dire*—what room was left for rewards or kudos? Indeed, Alex Taylor looked on "honours" as almost discreditable, things intended for the "hoi polloi"; like the carrot which is dangled before the donkey, but not before the racehorse. The paradox may seem quixotic—the feeling existed, however, in the hearts

of the majority of her Majesty's representatives in the Panjab of those days.

There were, therefore, no ceremonies of inauguration on the Road, either of bridges or of large completed sections. As soon as any part of it was fit for use, it was used, by a public which took what it received as a matter of course, grumbled when an incomplete bridge or cutting forced it to make a detour by a provisional road, and gave no thought to the brains and labour which had been expended in its service.

This systematic exaltation of work aboye personality is doubtless admirable, especially when applied by individuals to themselves, or even to their subordinates. Is it desirable to apply it, however, to the achievements of the great dead?

The crisis of the Mutiny threw up three military geniuses of the first order—Henry Havelock, Robert Napier, and John Nicholson—and the greatest of these was Nicholson.

The child of the Panjab, loved and feared by the wild people he ruled, his great personality had imposed itself also on the imagination and hearts of his fellow-countrymen in his Province. When the news of his death reached Northern India, the brilliant soldier and administrator, Herbert Edwardes, and the rough-hewn Chief Commissioner—wept, and the whole heart of the Panjab was gripped by that silent dismay which men experience in face of irremediable and inexorable calamity. As years passed it was felt that the Province should erect some visible sign of its consciousness of the greatness of the man who had trodden its soil and breathed its air. Gradually the idea took form.

Alex Taylor's Road crosses a spur of limestone rock running from the Murree Hills in a South-Westerly direction through a pass which had been utilised for the same purpose some two hundred and fifty years previously by Shah Jahan,[1]

[1] 1592-1666.

whose paved roadway, with riveted sides, not only still exists, but is as fresh to-day as if it had been made yesterday. The natives call this reach of the Mughal's road—the "Margala" the "snake's neck"—because of the swift, sinuous curves in which it sweeps upwards, and the word has given its name locally to both pass and range. The steepness of this ancient way forbade the utilisation of precisely the same alignment for the Grand Trunk Road; a short, though heavy cutting was made, therefore, with the result—the formation, between the two roads, of a small island-hill, at the head of the pass.

On the height thus isolated, there presently rose an obelisk, 230 feet high,[1] of the blue-grey limestone of which the range is composed. This site—a place of wide prospects—was admirably chosen: to the East, beyond the low grey wild olives and ilexes which clothe the sinking hillsides, stretches the vast Pindi plain, backed by the mountains behind Jhelum; while to the North lies Hazara, approached by the wide and fertile valley of Haripur; and, to the East and South-East, Peshawar, and the mountains of Kohat and Bannu—country with which the name of its autocratic ruler is for ever associated. Water was brought from a spring four miles distant to a chamber in the pass, and offered itself in a finely designed basin[2] to the passer-by.

There were then thousands of Englishmen in the Panjab whose hearts swelled if the name of Nicholson were uttered in their presence. The "Nikelsain" saga was the property of the frontier, and when the wandering Sikh minstrel brought his chanted legend to a close with the prayer to "the warriors' God" that He would make their hero "a Prince in heaven above," he voiced a people's longing.[3]

[1] Designed by Alex Taylor, and executed by Mr H. A. S. Fenner, A.I.C.E., Assistant Engineer.

[2] Designed by H. A. S. Fenner.

[3] See translation of Sikh border ballad, Trotter, *op. cit.*, p. 321.

Would it not have been well if white tents had arisen on those desolate wilds, if the Panjab Chiefs with their warlike followers, the half-savage people of Bannu and the frontier, and the white rulers of the Panjab, had joined to do honour to the Great, on the day on which that monument was complete? Would not the union of such divers elements in a great and generous common enthusiasm have done more to join hearts and bridge gulfs than years of benevolent rule?

But no! there was something in the association of a "tamasha" with the memory of one so high above praise, so disdainful of bunting and tinsel, which jarred on the nerves of his former comrades. It was decided that there should be no ceremony of inauguration: that the great solitary hill-top needle should lift itself silently against the sky, a fitting symbol of the greatness of one who had led the way, and that the fountain of pure water on the roadside, pouring itself quietly forth for the satisfaction of the needs of the humblest of God's creatures, should remind the traveller that the heart of the stern ruler it commemorated had overflowed with the simplest charities —and this without comment. Words, ceremonies, might vulgarise, desecrate. It was felt better that there should be none.

CHAPTER XXI

AMBEYLA

In the autumn of 1863, after three years of the strenuous life necessarily led by an officer engaged on a great Public Work, the two extremities of which lay some three hundred miles apart, Alex Taylor was again involved in warfare.

He embarked this time under the auspices of a friend of very old standing — Sir Neville Chamberlain — whose gallantry and swordsmanship he had admired fourteen years previously at Gujarat, during the pursuit, and at the mouth of the Khyber; and whose occasional companionship — together with that of John Nicholson—had been one of the delights of the lonely life on the Pindi-Peshawar Road. He had, moreover, been in infrequent but intimate contact with him during the penultimate weeks on the Ridge, during which the string-bed on which the wounded Brigadier lay was a centre to which the leading spirits in the camp gravitated for counsel — foremost amongst them, John Nicholson.

The object of this campaign was the punishment of a colony of fanatical Muhammadans, who had established themselves some forty years previously at Sitana—a fortress situated on a spur of the mountains North of the Indus—and had been a thorn in the side of Ranjit Singh and of his inheritors, the British Government at Lahore. This affair was at first expected to be a mere punitive expedition,

a "walk over," and was called "Sir Robert's[1] picnic." It proved, however, one of those tough little frontier wars which are made so deadly by the numerical disparity of the attacking and attacked, and by the character of the country in which they are waged.

The Sitana fanatics had previously given trouble to the British Government: an expedition had been led against them by Colonel Mackeson in 1852; and another by Sir Sydney Cotton in 1858, at which date they had been largely reinforced by mutineers and rebels from Hindustan. Sir Sydney burnt their villages and those of their allies, and destroyed their forts. They migrated, therefore, to Malka, a village on one of the Southerly spurs of the Mahaban mountains, which they subsequently fortified. These Muhammadans were believed to be an isolated group of irreconcilables, but this, unfortunately, was not the case: it was afterwards found that they formed part of an anti-British Muhammadan Association, of which Patna in Bihar was the headquarters, which had "centres" throughout Hindustan, and of which Malka and Sitana were but the frontier outposts. Well supplied with money and recruits from the South, the rebels soon recovered from the blow they had received, made alliances with neighbouring tribes, fortified themselves, made inroads into British territory, and, finally, in 1863, ventured to attack the Guides' camp at Topi. It being clear that punishment was not a sufficient deterrent, the British Government decided to wipe them off the board.

The precipitous character of the wild mountains which were to be the field of operations made this decision difficult of execution. The Chambla valley—which was tolerably level, and inhabited by mixed tribes reported friendly and little likely to combine against us—was said to be

[1] Sir Robert Montgomery, Lieutenant-Governor of the Panjab.

the best avenue of approach to Malka, the goal of the expedition. This fastness, it was alleged, could be reached by a lightly equipped army advancing by forced marches, in two days, reckoning from its entrance from Yusafzai into the mountains; the expedition, therefore, was expected to occupy little more than a week or ten days.

The Chambla was screened on the North and West by the Guru mountains, through which two passes gave it access—the Ambeyla and Daran passes. As the latter was inaccessible to artillery at a short distance from its entry, the former—which was said to be easily practicable throughout—was selected for use. There was one great objection to the use of this Ambeyla route, however: though nominally British, the country through which it passed was claimed as theirs by the Bunairwals—a powerful and warlike tribe inhabiting the Guru mountains and the country behind them. It was not impossible that these hillmen might view the transit of an armed British Force through their mountain defences with distrust, nor unlikely that they might fly to arms in defence of their co-religionists. It would not be difficult to hold up the British Army in the narrow pass, or—closing behind it—to cut off its communications with its base: the Bunairwals at this juncture, therefore, were not an enemy to be despised.

The Political officers consulted declared, however, that though the Bunairwals might possibly withhold their active support, their neutrality, at least, might be counted on—for they professed a Muhammadanism of a different complexion from that of the Sitana fanatics, who were disciples of a certain Saiyad Ahmad, whereas they were under the rule of the Akhund of Swat—a sort of local Muhammadan Pope, who greatly resented the intrusion into his preserves of the followers of another leader. Their relations to the British Government, moreover, had long

been perfectly amicable. A Column was formed, therefore, destined to penetrate into the enemy's country, dislodge the rebels from their stronghold, and destroy it.

On the 18th October, accordingly, a small force—less than 6000 men, with nineteen guns—was launched under the command of Brigadier-General Sir Neville Chamberlain, with Alex Taylor's old friend, Alfred Wilde—now a Lieutenant-Colonel—and Colonel Turner, C.B., at the head of Brigades; while Taylor himself—now Lieutenant-Colonel—was Chief Engineer to the expedition, his two road-subalterns, Lieutenants "Buster Browne" and "Toonie Blair," the gallant and debonnair, being prominent among his "boys." On the same day the British Government issued a Proclamation to the Bunairwals in which it was stated that the British troops *en route* for Malka would be forced to march near or through Bunair-territory, but that the tribesmen should fear neither injury to their property nor an attack on their independence, the sole object of the expedition being the punishment of the outrages of the Sitana fanatics.

The Advance Column commanded by Colonel Wilde, having marched all night—it started at 1 a.m. on 20th October—entered the pass at dawn, but instead of a road which they had been told would be easy in the extreme, found a narrowing track, leading steeply up the bed of a mountain stream encumbered with boulders and large masses of rock, and often overgrown with low trees and jungle. The guns were drawn up this difficult way by horses at first, but it was soon found necessary to transfer them to the backs of elephants. The lower reaches of the mountain-slopes were covered with wild fig-trees and date-palms; these soon gave place to primeval firs of great size, the serried ranks of which were broken, now and again, by great cliff-like outcroppings of rock, frequently crowned by small groups of hostile marksmen, to whom Colonel Wilde's men, moving, eventually, in

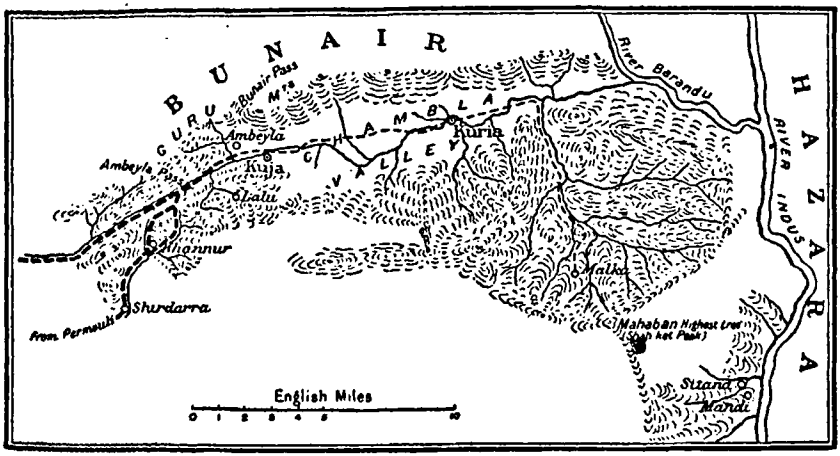
single file, presented tempting targets. So serious, indeed, was the annoyance given by these sharpshooters, that in spite of the extreme difficulty of the ground, Colonel Wilde ordered detachments of the Guides and of the 1st Panjab Infantry, to drive them over the Ridge, and to occupy positions commanding the road up which the Main Column would soon follow. By 2 p.m. this Column reached the top of the pass, and secured the watershed of the Chambla. Colonel Wilde succeeded in encamping his weary men—who had been marching over most difficult country since midnight—on fairly level ground commanding a fine view over the Chambla valley.

Meanwhile, the Main Column had left their base in the Yusafzai plain at 3 a.m., the men stumbling along the rough and murky track by the fitful flare of blazing bonfires lighted by the villagers along their route. "At last," writes one of the marchers, "came the chill wind that always precedes the first streak of day—so well known to everyone who has marched by night in India—followed by a greyish light, and the first notes of some wild bird in the jungle; and then the jagged hill-line began to show out, high against the Eastern sky, like a ruined wall—seemingly close to us." Presently the mouth of the pass was gained, and the Force found itself within the rapidly narrowing defile along which it had been preceded by Wilde's Column. "The hills on either side grew closer and closer together, and masses of rock—seeming at first to bar all further progress—had to be worked round, or scrambled over," continues the letter already quoted. "The Column, which had been moving in sections, was soon reduced to fours, then to file, and, at last, men scrambled along independently as best they could, and this not for a few hundred yards but for more than three miles." Fortunately this progress was not made under fire, but under the cover of Alfred Wilde's riflemen.

Late in the afternoon the head of the pass was gained. Night had fallen, however, before the guns arrived, while, thanks to the unexpected difficulties offered by the road, luggage, food, and servants dribbled slowly in during the course of the following days. "Many in camp, indeed nearly everyone, slept as they stood, without any food or covering," wrote Alex Taylor to his wife next morning (21st October). "We had lots of wood, however, and fine fires. . . . Native soldiers and followers had nothing to eat all day yesterday. We are now—10 a.m.—waiting for food, and very hungry." He himself, however, had done well; a friend had shared his tarpaulin with him, and also some bread and meat. "Pollard's jersey came into play, and so did the greatcoat and fishing stockings. I slept most comfortably, and am very jolly this morning. Lent Browne my choga," he reports. He had written four days previously, from Camp Swabie in the Yusafzai plain, "it *is* hot in the daytime, but in shirt-sleeves and slippers, with blankets and rezais spread on the top of the tent, it is bearable." Very trying, therefore, was the sudden change to a tentless, foodless camp, four thousand feet up in the mountains and swept by winds from neighbouring snow-fields. He was, however, very jolly, as he says, and in the midst of friends. "Dear old Wilde is here," he writes, "looking very well; and a good old boy he is, evidently a great favourite with his officers. Johnnie Watson, too, Probyn, and Brownlow, whose regiment . . . is one of the best in camp! . . . Blair and Browne, too, both looking ever so well." "They have something like two mules apiece, and are not troubled with extra luggage!" he adds. This equipment was evidently very modest, for he himself—Spartan though he was—had a following of seventeen servants, six mules, and three horses, at the outset of the campaign.

This halt at the crest of the pass—which had not formed

part of Sir Neville Chamberlain's original plan, but had been forced on him by the unlooked-for roughness of the approach, and the consequent difficulty in getting the guns and commissariat into camp—was prolonged by another consideration, viz., uncertainty as to the attitude of the Bunairwals, whose action in lining the pass during the passage of the troops and in firing on them, had been unexpected and of ill omen. The General's future proceedings depended largely on theirs; for it would be imprudent,



obviously, to move his little force deep into the heart of the mountains at the further end of the Chambla valley, while a powerful enemy threatened both his flank and his long and difficult line of communications with his distant base.

The position at the head of the pass was almost impregnable. To the left, two thousand feet above the camp, rose the heights of the Guru range, rising in a succession of ridges, steep but not precipitous, the general direction of which was parallel with the pass; while the occasional plateaux, knolls, and high granite peaks on its sides afforded convenient and safe locations for picquets. The ground to the front of the camp widened as it descended, opening out into little

plateaux which gradually sank to the flat valley of the Chambla. The latter was about three miles distant from the camp and threaded by a running stream, the head of which supplied the camp with water. To the left of this valley rose the mountains separating it from Bunair, pierced, at a distance of about a mile or more from the mouth of the Ambeyla pass, by the Bunair pass. In the heart of the valley—about five miles from camp—was the little village of Kuja, and some seven miles further up, Kuria, on a spur of the great Mahaban mountain-group, hidden in the folds of which lay Malka. A range of hills lower than the Guru rose on the right of the camp, its crests and peaks crowned by our picquets. To the rear—far, far below, pale and grey like the distant waters of a rippled lake—lay the valley of the Yusafzai.[1]

Time passed. The British Force had occupied the crest of the pass on the night of the 20th Oct., the 21st slipped by, but owing to the extreme roughness of the crowded track which was the only way to the camp, it was not till the morning of the 22nd that ammunition and stores arrived in bulk sufficient to justify the General in preparing for forward movement.

On that forenoon Alex Taylor was directed to conduct a reconnaissance as far as Kuria, in order to learn whether the road was such as to admit of the passage of Artillery, and also to test the temper of the tribes whose lands it either traversed or skirted. "The information received," writes Sir Neville Chamberlain in his official report, "was to the effect that considerable bodies of the Bunair tribe were occupying the pass which leads from Chambla into

[1] See *Ambeyla Dispatches*, reprinted from the *Gazette of India*, by William Clowes & Son., 1895. Dispatch No. 1, from General Sir N. Chamberlain, K.C.B., to Adjutant-General, dated—"Camp, Crest of Ambeyla Pass," 21st October 1863.

Bunair from near Ambeyla village, but that their intentions towards us were peaceable. The Commissioner—Colonel Reynell Taylor—had communicated with them, and they had avowed their intention of merely acting on the defensive, and of opposing us only in the event of our attempting to enter the Bunair territory. Being, of course, most desirous to give the Bunair people no cause of offence, or even of suspicion, I had desired Colonel Taylor to act with the greatest circumspection. I was aware that from the foot of the pass the reconnoitring party would have the choice of two roads through the Chambla valley. The first, which was said to be the better of the two, passes by the village of Ambeyla, and keeps to the North side of the Chambla valley under the hills which divide Chambla from Bunair. The second is by Kuja, and runs along the South side of the valley. Knowing that Ambeyla was regarded by the Bunair people as one of their own villages, though actually in Chambla, I gave Colonel Taylor orders to avoid that road and to proceed by the Kuja route—thus guarding in every possible way against giving offence to the Bunair people, and endeavouring to prove to them that we desired to hold entirely aloof from them and their country."[1]

Thus instructed, Alex Taylor left the camp before noon with two Companies of Sappers and a detachment of Pioneers, whom he soon left, *en route*, under the direction of Buster Browne to improve the two miles of road lying between the camp and the mouth of the pass. At the latter point he was joined by a detachment of Cavalry —some 200 Sabres under Lieutenant-Colonel Dighton Probyn, C.B., V.C.—and 250 rank and file of the 20th Panjab Cavalry under Major Charles Brownlow. Directing Major Brownlow to occupy the broken ground at the foot of the pass, he pressed forward with the Cavalry towards

[1] *Ambeyla Dispatches*, p. 13.

Kuja. As he passed the Kotal[1] leading into Bunair, he saw that it was occupied in force by the Bunairwals. This, however, was only what he expected, and, hearing that none of the tribesmen had entered the Chambla valley, he concluded that the General had been correctly informed and that all was well.

On arriving at Kuja he learned that the valley to his front was quite unoccupied. As reliable information concerning the character and condition of the further reaches of the road was lacking, and as its possession would be invaluable to the General, he determined to take advantage of this fortunate circumstance, and decided to push his reconnaissance as far as was compatible with obedience to the order given him to be in camp by sunset. Leaving the main body of his Cavalry at Kuja, he galloped on, therefore, with a small escort to the mountain village of Kuria, seven miles distant, and learned that the road was practicable for artillery from Ambeyla to Kuria, but that beyond that point it was exceedingly rugged—important information.

Daylight lingered longer on the heights than in the valley, and when the horsemen clattered back into Kuja, at 4.30, the sun was nearing the Guru peaks; and the shades of night were falling fast when the little party reached the junction of the track to Bunair with the main road. Its members then found, to their dismay, that the tribesmen had descended into the valley, and were blocking their homeward way in a most menacing and determined manner; indeed, they were in the act of taking possession of the patch of broken ground at the mouth of the pass. It being necessary to prevent this, and to engage them until Major Brownlow could come up, Colonel Probyn charged them at the head of his two hundred Sabres in a most spirited way, and enabled Major Brownlow to occupy

[1] "Saddle-back."

the ground in question. Meanwhile the sun sank, a dim moon illuminated the rough ground, and the enemy pressed Major Brownlow very closely, getting in among his men, sword in hand; gradually the camp picquets were engaged—the tide of war which beat up towards the camp consisting largely of single combats of an almost Homeric character.

"The job was getting very serious," writes Taylor to his wife; "we were two miles from camp in a mountain pass, in the dark, and greatly outnumbered. Brownlow and his men behaved admirably, and we at last reached camp. The enemy surrounded one of Brownlow's detached parties, and we had the greatest difficulty in saving it. . . . At one time, Browne—our 'Bara-Browne'—had to defend himself. He cut down two men, and was slightly wounded in the arm by a spear. They were quickly checked at camp, but still pressed on in great numbers, and kept us all under arms till 2 a.m. We only just got back in time. Chamberlain was angry with me for being so late, but he now thinks . . . I did right in pushing the opportunity."

"The night-attack formed a curious and picturesque scene," writes one who was present. "Imagine a dark line of jungle to the front; on the right and left the two port fires of the mountain train shining like stars; while between them a dim line of infantry stretches across the plain. Suddenly comes a wild shout of 'Allah! Allah!'; the matchlocks flash and crack from behind the shadow of trees; there is a glitter of whirling sword-blades, and a mob of dusky figures rush across the open space and charge almost up to the bayonets. Then comes a flash and a roar; the grape and canister dash up the stones and the gravel, and patter among the leaves at a close range. The whole line lights up with the fitful flashes of a sharp file-fire, and, as the smoke clears off, assailants are nowhere to be seen;

feeble groans from the front, and cries for water in some Pathan patois, alone tell us that the fire has been successful. Presently come another shot or two, from a new direction. A few rolling stones on the hill inform the quick ear of the native troops that the enemy is attempting to take us in flank, and they push up to meet them at once; and so the line of fire and the sharp crackling of our rifles extend gradually far up the dark and precipitous hillside, and the roar of battle, multiplied a thousandfold by the echoes of the mountain, fills the long valley from end to end. Then there is another shout and charge, more grape and musketry, which end as before. But this time a dark group which moves slowly through our line, and carries, tenderly, some heavy burden, tells us that their shooting too has told. Presently, from near the centre of the line, comes a voice, so full of command that all stop to listen and prepare to obey. The order is—'Cease firing; let them charge up to the bayonet, and then . . .' The rest is lost; but every soldier knows well how the sentence ended, and stays his hand, waiting in a deep silence which contrasts strangely with the previous uproar. High up, on a little knoll well to the front, we see the tall form of the General towering above his Staff, and looking silently into the darkness before him. Apparently, however, they had had enough, and but a few straggling shots from time to time tell that an enemy of whose numbers we could form no idea still lay in the jungle before us. Presently, these also ceased; but long afterwards we could hear their footsteps and the stones rolling on the hills as they retired, and judged that they must be carrying off the dead and wounded, or they would have moved more quietly."[1]

And thus the Bunairwals declared themselves, and converted "Sir Robert's picnic" into the Ambeyla campaign.

[1] See Forrest (*Sir N. Chamberlain*), *op. cit.*, p. 422.

Their action was premeditated. Our Political officers had been ill-informed. When the Sitana fanatics saw a British force assembling in the Yusafzai valley, they realised its purpose, and immediately, raising the Prophet's banner, called on the Muhammadan tribes of the frontier to strike a blow for the Faith. They applied first and foremost to the Bunairwals, whom they warned against a British attack on their independence. Pointing to the two passes into the Chambla valley—the one remote from Bunair territory, and the other on its fringe—they observed that if the British were sincere in their professions they would use the former; if not so, the latter. The authorities chose the latter, and communicated their intention of doing so to the Bunairwals on the day on which they put it into execution. This was considered sharp practice by the tribesmen, who drew their own conclusions, and appealed to their spiritual Chief. The Akhund of Swat not only marched to their assistance with upwards of a hundred standards from Swat—each standard representing some thirty footmen, and a hundred horsemen, —but called on the tribes inhabiting the remotest valleys and hillsides of the Trans-Indus to unite in striking a blow against the invading infidel. Under the influence of fanaticism, old animosities were forgotten; clans usually hostile to each other prepared to fight side by side, and it seemed as if the flames of a Holy War were about to envelop the whole of the mountain country lying between the Indus and Afghanistan.

In face of this coalition, Sir Neville abandoned his original programme.

The character of the high ground he held obliged the tribesmen to hold its neighbourhood with a large body of men, the feeding of whom was a constant and increasing difficulty, and it threw the burden of taking the offensive on them—a great disadvantage. "My judgment tells

me," he wrote officially, "that with our present numbers the only way to uphold the honour of our arms and the interests of the Government is to act on the defensive in the position the Force now holds, and to trust to the effect of time and of the discouragement which repeated unsuccessful attacks are likely to produce upon the enemy, to weaken their numbers and to break up their combination."

He therefore applied for reinforcements, put the camp into an adequate state of defence, had the approaches to its front and rear defended by breastworks, and guns placed in position, its picquets stockaded, etc.[1]

As the army before Delhi had lain for months on the Ridge, so Sir Neville Chamberlain's Force lay—pending the arrival of reinforcements—for six weeks on the rocky crest overhanging the Chambla valley, surrounded by a ring of mountains peopled by thousands of hostile tribesmen, whose attack it invited, contenting itself with repaying blows with interest, protecting its communications with its base, and letting discouragement, lack of food, and mutual suspicion dissolve the unexpected coalition.

It will be remembered that the camp lay in a fairly level trough-like valley, overhung on both sides by steep fir-clad mountain-ridges; the heights of the Guru mountains overlooked it on the left, while the lower but precipitous hills on its right sank gradually to the valley below in a confusion of steep descents, crags, peaks, and hills of a cone-like formation. Near one of the latter rose the fortified mountain-village of Lalu. As the tribesmen were wont to assemble in their thousands on the summits of these heights, and, swarming down, to attempt to storm the camp, Sir Neville's advanced picquets were kept constantly on the alert, especially those holding the keys to his left and right defences—the Eagle's Nest, and the Crag. These posts bore

[1] *Ambeyla Dispatches*, p. 20.

the brunt of the enemy's attacks; they were held, lost, sometimes—for the smallness of the foothold they afforded their defenders, their proximity to excellent cover, of which the tribesmen, fighting on familiar ground, took every advantage, and their distance from camp, laid them open to irresistible rushes—but always recaptured, the gallantry with which they were both defended and assaulted making their names historic.

The Eagle's Nest was a steep rocky knoll rising from a small plateau on the South-Eastern face of the Guru mountains, and overlooked the left flank of the camp. Its summit—which gave foothold to some *one hundred men*—was defended by a rough semicircular stone breastwork, with a frontage of some ninety feet. Behind it rose rocky, wooded, and precipitous mountain slopes, on the crest of which—some five hundred yards from its top—rose a breastwork which frequently sheltered some *two or three thousand* of the enemy, to whom the wooded mountain slopes gave easy access to the plateau from which it sprang.

An attack made on this post on the 26th October may be taken as typical of the warfare in which the Force was involved. At about noon, the Bunairwals—who had long been seen collecting on the crest of the ridge on the left—moved down its slopes; their matchlock men, taking dexterous advantage of all cover, maintained a galling fire from above on the picquet; while their swordsmen, standard-bearers, and others—after charging bravely across the open plateau at the base of the position—swarmed up the sides of the height. So steady was the fire with which they were received, however, that they sank back, and withdrew uphill, leaving the ground strewn with their dead. While this struggle for the Eagle's Nest was in progress, similar encounters were taking place on its front and rear—every coign of vantage in its proximity being held by small detachments—

generally some one hundred and twenty strong—from various regiments, and hotly contested. On one of these units being withdrawn, the attack on the Eagle's Nest was renewed, the stream of standards and yelling men again set downhill, and surged about the base of the position; the swordsmen again climbed to the assault, but were again repulsed; finally so, for that day.

Success, however, was bought at a heavy price. Fifty men fell—half the number held in the post at one time—and two young officers of promise were killed: Lieutenant Richmond, who fell while encouraging his men by his personal example in their gallant resistance to the enemy, and Lieutenant Clifford, a volunteer, who was struck down while leading a sally from the rocks at the foot of the eminence. A brave native officer also, Subadar Major Sher Ali Shah, laid down his life on this occasion, dying like a gallant soldier at his commanding officer's side, recommending his son to Major Brownlow's protection."[1]

Conspicuous among the brave this day were Major Brownlow and Captain Butler, V.C., of the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers. The former commanded the defenders of the Eagle's Nest, and "greatly distinguished himself by his ready resource and gallant personal bearing," writes Colonel Alfred Wilde. The latter was one of the heroes of Lucknow; as the reader will remember, he swam the Gumti on the 9th of March to make sure that the enemy had abandoned their first line of defence.[2]

The *pendant* to the Eagle's Nest was the "Crag," a rocky pinnacle overlooking the right flank of the camp. A track—so steep and difficult that it could be used in places by men moving in single file only—led to its summit, which, when reached, was so narrow that at first it gave foothold

[1] See *Dispatch*, Colonel Alfred Wilde, C.B., 27th October 1863.

[2] See *ante*, p. 129.

to some twelve men only, but was eventually so enlarged, levelled, and defended by breastworks as to give standing-ground to some one hundred men. Its right and rear were precipitous and practically unassailable; its left and front, however, were much less steep, and were encumbered with trees and rocks, under cover of which the enemy were sometimes able to collect, and, rushing the post, to bear down its little group of defenders by sheer weight of numbers. Three times was it lost, and three times retaken. So heavy was the price in blood paid for the possession of this post—the key to our right defences—the loss of which made our lower right picquets untenable, that the tribesmen called it, not the Crag, but Katlgah, the place of slaughter.

Space forbids any enumeration of the many incidents of the constant stream of hand-to-hand fighting which beat against that rock and sometimes crested it. The drama of its defence during a period of forty-eight hours, however, is too characteristic of frontier-warfare, and too picturesque, to be passed unobserved. It is the night of the 12th November. The sun has sunk. The fir-clad hills lift their dark bulk against a pale sky. Presently a young moon arises, and hills and rocks and trees are invested in dim, uncertain radiance. Below shine the white tents of the sleeping camp, from which now and again mount sounds of men in movement and an occasional subdued bugle-call. Watch-fires, flaring along half a mile of mountain ridge on the right, show that it is occupied by the enemy in force. On the summit of the Crag lie "Charlie" Brownlow and 160 of his men; alert, expectant. Posted about the rough and rapidly falling ground at its feet are other strong picquets. At about 10 p.m. the enemy begin to slip *en masse* down the hill, they move silently, but the rustling of leaves and the sound of falling stones betray their move-

ments, and presently the hollow in front of the Crag is full of them.

Then "they broke into yells," writes Major Brownlow, "and advanced in masses to our attack, their number being, as far as I could judge from sight and sound, at least two thousand. I allowed them to approach to within a hundred yards of us, and then opened a rapid and well-sustained file fire from our front-face, which I believe did great execution; it soon silenced their shouts and drove them under cover, some to the wooded and broken ground to our left, and the rest into the ravine below us. In half an hour they rallied, and, assembling in almost increased numbers, rushed to the attack, this time assaulting on our front as well as on the left. They were received with the greatest steadiness, and again recoiled before us. Their attacks continued until 4 a.m., each becoming weaker than the last, and many of them being mere feints to enable them to carry off their dead and wounded.

The post was at one time in considerable danger of being forced at its left-front angle, which, from its position, was badly protected by our fire. The enemy clambered up, and, assailing its occupants with stones from our breastworks, stunned, and drove them back. At this critical moment, the gallantry of five men of the 20th Native Panjab Infantry, . . . saved the post; answering my call when others wavered, they followed me into the corner, and, hurling stones on the enemy, who were close under the wall and sheltered from musketry, drove them back, and rebuilt the parapet, holding that point for the rest of the night."

At 8 a.m., the enemy having temporarily withdrawn, the picquet was relieved by Lieutenant Davidson and ninety of the 1st Panjab Infantry, Major Brownlow retiring with his men, who were quite worn out, having been on duty for forty-eight hours, during which they had worked all day and

fought all night—their muskets were so foul that they could hardly load them.[1] Lieutenant Davidson and his men were scarcely in the saddle—so to speak—when they were dislodged by a sudden onslaught of the enemy, who, taking possession of the summit of the Crag, commenced firing rapidly into the picquets and camp below. Lieutenant Davidson being killed while gallantly endeavouring to rally his party, its rout became complete; his men, borne down by overwhelming numbers, gave way, and, flinging themselves down the Crag, rushed, wounded, and a prey to panic, past the breastwork leading to the main picquet defended by the men of their own regiment, and on and on towards camp; a stampede of camp-followers and animals in a babel of noise and dust adding to the general confusion. The officers commanding the lower picquets, however, kept their men admirably in hand; a detachment of the 1st Panjab Infantry charged—losing the young officer who led them—checked the torrent, and held the ground at the base of the Crag until the arrival of the 101st Royal Bengal Fusiliers made them numerically strong enough to storm and reoccupy the Crag. With this success the fighting ceased as suddenly as it had begun. So severely, however, had the enemy lost in both men and morale, that no further attack was made on any part of the long British line of defences throughout the remainder of that day.

Among the picturesque incidents of that night's fighting was a short musical interlude which occurred while the struggle was in progress. Brownlow's Panjabis had just repulsed a determined attack when a voice from their midst called for a song to one of the assailants, evidently a friend and a musician. The proposal was received with loud laughter, and, with Charles Brownlow's permission, was put into effect. A truce was called; a Bajauri came forward, and,

[1] *Ambeyla Dispatches*, pp. 53 ff.

taking up an isolated position in the misty darkness below, trolled a well-known Pashtu ditty, which was enthusiastically received by both friend and foe. The 20th Panjabis had no intention of being outdone in this exhibition of nerve and talent: after a hurried consultation, two of them, Afridis, jumping on to the top of the breastworks—in which position they were clearly silhouetted against the moonlit sky—gave the company a martial duet, enlivened by many a spirited shout and flourish. On its conclusion they dropped sharply into the shelter of the parapet; applause and laughter rose, and died away, and, after a warning shout, fighting was resumed on both sides, the enemy's first volley killing one of the defenders of the Crag and wounding others.

An incident, this, of border warfare which would have delighted Walter Scott, as would also the following occurrence. The men on duty at the same picquet suffered severely on another occasion from the attentions of a couple of "snipers" on a neighbouring height. One of the former came forward, asked for and obtained permission to sally forth with the object of silencing the enemy. Somewhat to the dismay of the officer in command, he removed his *pagri* which he threw on to the ground, stripped himself to the waist, tucked up his pyjamas, and, thus lightly clad and armed with a matchlock only, plunging into the woodland was lost to view. About an hour later a shot was heard; another; then silence reigned. After a time the adventurer suddenly reappeared, his head enveloped in voluminous *pagri*-folds, and a matchlock and two talwars in his hand. Having laid the latter without a word at his officer's feet, he silently rejoined his Company. In answer to questions, he replied: "There is nothing to tell. I found them, and shot them."

In Charles Brownlow's regiment throughout this cam-

paign served a young cousin—Celadon Brownlow —who received his baptism of fire in the struggles for the Crag and Eagle's Nest.

The unexpected hostility of the hillsmen, who held the heights on the left of the pass and its approaches, rendered the route by which the Force had reached the head of the gorge on 20th October—and by which reinforcements and supplies still travelled—both insecure and costly to defend. It also impeded the use of the extremely rugged way into the Chambla valley, which was commanded on both sides by these tribesmen whose feelings had been so inaccurately appraised. The only way out of this difficulty was to construct new routes along lines inaccessible to fire from these unexpectedly inimical ridges, and—when these roads were practicable—to move the camp to the right. With this end

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Celadon Brownlow, C.B., late Indian Staff Corps. Belonging to a family which in the last sixty years has given thirty-three of its members to the Service, three of whom were killed and three wounded during the Victorian wars in India, he worthily maintained the traditions of his name. He served in Afghanistan, and in more than one of the wars on the North-West frontier, and finally commanded the 1st Panjab Infantry (the "Cokies" of Delhi fame). His modesty and gallantry won him many friends, among whom none was more sincere than Alex Taylor, with whom he was destined to be connected in after years by family ties, for in 1878 he married Rosalie Munn, the youngest of the party of ladies who had given the soldier from Delhi so warm a welcome at Ashburnham in 1858.

Among the most distinguished military members of the Brownlow family are:—William Brownlow (3rd Lord Lurgan), Grenadier Guards; Major the Honourable John Brownlow (60th Rifles); F. M. Sir Charles Brownlow, G.C.B.; Lieutenant-General Henry Brownlow, R.E.; Lieutenant Elliot Brownlow, B.E. (killed at Lucknow); Colonel Celadon Brownlow, C.B.; Colonel Francis Brownlow, C.B., commanded 72nd Highlanders (killed at battle of Kandahar); Major-General William Vesey Brownlow, C.B., commanded King's Dragoon Guards.

To these names should be added that of Major-General Sir Stuart Brownlow Beatson, K.C.S.I., C.B., only son of Sir Charles Brownlow's only sister, Cora, whose husband, Captain Stuart Beatson, died during the battle of Cawnpore. See *ante*, ii. p. 87, and i. p. 292.

in view, Alex Taylor and his able subordinates, Lieutenants Blair,[1] Browne,[2] and Tupper-Carter,[3] were occupied, from after the 22nd of October onwards, in examining the wild Southern spurs of the mountains on which the Force was encamped, and eventually succeeded in tracing a road which —leaving the earlier route well on the North—ran backward, past the villages of Khannur and Shirdarra to Permouli, a station on the Yusafzai plain, destined to be Sir Neville's new base. They also projected a road which, traversing the Western slopes in front of the camp, ran towards Ambeyla. This was so placed that when the arrival of the expected reinforcements made a forward movement practicable, troops could advance by it without coming under the fire of the tribesmen on the Guru peaks.

The character of the precipitous, torrent-seamed mountain-land which was the scene of the Engineers' labours, and the fact that its often densely-wooded slopes gave cover to brave enemies skilled in mountain warfare, rendered these preliminary reconnaissances both difficult and dangerous. Nor did these difficulties and dangers decrease when the route to be followed was fixed and the work put in hand, for the spurs and ravines, the trees and rocks through which the way was cleft, not only sheltered watchful hillmen, but made it difficult for the covering parties and the roadmakers working under their protection to keep in uninterrupted touch with each other. How difficult is shown by the following tragic incident.

From the outset, the length of the line covered by the proposed road and the configuration of the country it crossed, kept Taylor in the saddle from dawn to sunset. Day after day, with the help of their glasses, the officers in

[1] The late Colonel Henry Blair.
[2] The late Major-General Sir James Browne, K.C.S.I., C.B.
[3] The late Lieutenant-Colonel Tupper Carter-Campbell.

the right defences could see him galloping along the scar which marked the course of the future road—a way resonant with the intermittent thunder of blasting, edged with raw cuttings and embankments, and set with piles of felled firs which practised workmen were gradually shaping into the rough timber-bridges which presently spanned steep nullas, and offered themselves for the passage of men and material.

On the 6th of November—worn by fatigue and by a troublesome Indian malady, the scourge of the camp—he did not leave his tent till mid-day; joining Alfred Wilde, the Commandant of the right defences, he then rode towards one of his fatigue-parties, which was working on the right front of the British position under the direction of Buster Browne, and under the protection of covering parties stationed on various overhanging spurs. On reaching commanding ground, the two officers saw that the enemy were collecting in considerable force in the plain below, and, agreeing that it would be prudent to withdraw both parties, dispatched orders to this effect to the officers under their respective commands. Taylor, who was really ill, was then forced to withdraw to Alfred Wilde's quarters.

They were still together three hours later, when Colonel Wilde received a note begging for reinforcements from Major Harding, an officer on Sir Neville's staff, who seemed to be in temporary command of the covering-party—a request which surprised them, for they were naturally under the impression that their order to withdraw had been acted on, both by the working-party and by the detachment covering it. It soon appeared, however, that owing to some confusion in the transmission of orders, the covering-party had not withdrawn at mid-day, though the working-party had done so, and that it had been subsequently attacked and isolated by large bodies of tribesmen, by whom it was

now hard pressed. Major Harding, who had been put in command by Sir Neville, had already been largely reinforced by Major Brownlow, who commanded neighbouring picquets, but was still overmatched.

The short November day was darkening to its close before Wilde's reinforcements from camp could get on to the ground, but—though the 4th Gurkhas forced their way in the failing light across the rough slopes which separated them from the beleaguered picquet, some of them even reaching the spur on which Major Harding and his men were fighting for dear life, and though a Mountain Battery from one of the lower spurs kept some of the enemy in check—it was too late. Major Harding withdrew his picquet as night fell and attempted to retire up the ridge, but was cut off in the darkness. "He was the last man to leave the picquet," writes Colonel Wilde in his official report, "and his bearing throughout the day was that of a brave and gallant soldier."[1] That evening, the melancholy bugle-call, "We've lost our way, we've lost our way," sounded imploringly from the dim mountains, and many a gallant man there was whose voice was never again heard in camp.

"It is a sad story," wrote Alex Taylor at the time. "What could be done was done, but it soon became dark, and before help arrived Major Harding had to try to retire. They tried to carry off the wounded, but could not. All were cut up. Harding and two other officers were killed, —cut about in all directions. Early next morning we went on to the ground, and found thirty-one bodies—three officers, four European soldiers, and twenty-four Native soldiers,—and brought them in. . . . Harding was wounded before the retreat began, and, during the retreat, was being carried away by two Gurkhas,[2] when four of the enemy

[1] *Ambeyla Dispatches*, pp. 42 ff.
[2] Three, say the *Ambeyla Dispatches*.

overtook them, pulled Harding off the back of the man carrying him, and cut him to pieces; the Gurkhas escaped. . . . Altogether we lost in the affair some ninety men and officers, killed and wounded.[1] . . . You remember Harding at Murree? a nice, gentlemanly fellow."

On the 18th November, the roads, executed under the conditions just described, being practicable, and the preparations for a new camp connected with them being complete, the left picquet and the camp itself were withdrawn to their new positions on the right of the gorge. So skilfully was this done, that, though the enemy's advanced posts were only some four hundred yards from our extreme left picquets, the tribesmen were in complete ignorance of what was on foot until the movement was complete, and our former right-picquets had become our left-defences; they then, however, made a spirited attack, which was repelled, though with considerable loss on our side, both in officers and men.

When it was generally known that the British Force had abandoned its position for one connected by a passable road with a new base in the plains, a rumour that the invading army was beginning to give way spread with incredible swiftness along and across the frontier; it thrilled the Muhammadans of Peshawar and Kohat, and even reached Kabul—its immediate result being an ominous accession to the fighting men in the Chambla valley, and on the Guru heights. Waves of attack beat in quick succession against the new position, surging most persistently against two posts—the old Crag picquet, which rose in close proximity to the new camp, and the Water picquet, which Colonel Taylor had had stockaded, and which commanded the stream

[1] The names of these Gurkhas were:—Sepoy Dan Singh, Sepoy Jangbir—on whose back Major Harding was killed,—and Sepoy Bulbhudder. In recognition of their gallantry the General conferred on them the much-prized Order of Merit.

which was now the sole source of water at the disposal of the army.

On the following day (19th November) the General sent an urgent telegram to the Government begging for reinforcements. "The troops," he wrote, "have now been hard worked both day and night for a month, and having to meet fresh enemies with loss is telling on them. I find it difficult to meet the enemy's attacks and provide convoys for the supplies and for the wounded sent to the rear. If you can give some fresh Corps to relieve those most reduced in numbers and dash, the relieved Corps can be sent to the plains, and used in support. This is urgent."

Early next day the enemy were seen to collect in great numbers in the neighbourhood of the Water and Crag picquets. They were kept in check by the fire from the Mountain Batteries, but the ground was broken, and presently the shimmer of moving standards was seen in dangerous proximity to the breastworks of the Crag. At about 3 p.m. the hillsmen made a sudden and overwhelming rush, and it soon became only too evident to those in camp that the British picquet had been dislodged, though some of its members were still clinging to the base of the Crag. Reinforcements were immediately dispatched. Meanwhile howitzers, guns, and Mountain Batteries played on the Crag with such precision that it was impossible for its new occupants to open fire on the camp, or to make the forward rush which would have been so redoubtable.

But the ground was rough, and the progress of the relieving troops seemed snail-like to those condemned to watch it from the camp. To none of these was this enforced inactivity more irksome than to the General, who —seeing the urgency of the crisis—soon determined to lead the attack in person. His Political officer, Colonel Reynell

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Taylor, describes what followed in a few breathless but eloquent sentences. "I dissuaded the General from leading, and he stood it for some time; but it was indeed a matter of vital importance for the whole Force, and, as the men could only stream up so slowly, and as a sword-in-hand rush was to be expected, and as the prospect of failure pressed on his mind, he could stand it no longer . . . in a few seconds we were the leading climbers of that terribly winding slope, shouting to the men to come on, and anxious at seeing what comparatively slow progress they could make; however, they came on steadily and without check."

On reaching the base of the Crag, Sir Neville turned to the Highlanders, told them that the picquet must be retaken at whatever price, and that he trusted them to do it. A few moments later, led by the General and Colonel Hope, they stubbornly mounted the steep face of the height, *en masse*, while the Gurkhas and Panjabis rushed its more shelving flanks. "Just at the crest," continues Colonel Reynell Taylor, "we encountered showers of stones, like Vesuvius before an eruption; *our* shells were crashing over our heads, and a body of the enemy on a neighbouring mound flanked us. When we got near the top, the General was struck. I was close to him, and saw him clutch his arm." But though wounded, he remained on the Crag, and continued to order the movements of the troops. Directed by him, they pushed the hillsmen back, and back—over ridge and spur—until the enemy gradually melted away from the mountain-side. A picquet of two hundred Highlanders were allowed to occupy the Crag for the night—a post of honour and danger for which they had begged. And thus, for the third and last time, the Crag picquet was lost and re-taken.

Sir Neville Chamberlain's wound proved far more serious than had been anticipated; inflammation, fever, and delirium set in, and his command passed—temporarily—into

the able hands of Alfred Wilde, and—finally—into those of General Garvock. As at Delhi, so on the frontier, Chamberlain bore the heat and burden of the day, and others harvested the fruit of his labours. "I cannot tell you how sorry I feel for poor Chamberlain," wrote Alex Taylor a week later, when the reinforcements which made operations possible were pouring in; "so far, he has had to bear the weight of failure, and now that matters are beginning to look up, he is obliged to leave. He was delirious last night, and asked for me, so I am told, several times. . . . A great loss," he adds; "he was, beyond mistake, the head of the Force." These words embodied the feeling of the whole army for its Chief.

A lull succeeded the fight of the 20th November. The tribesmen—discouraged by so severe a discomfiture where they had expected an easy victory—lay snarling round the Force without daring to attack it.

Never, however, were the objects for the attainment of which the little British Force had exposed itself upon the crags overlooking the Chambla valley nearer wreckage than during this period of suspended hostility, and this, thanks to the short-sightedness of the civil governors of India.

Lord Canning, who left India in March, 1862—Lady Canning in her grave, his own health shattered by six years of unremitting toil and the terrible strain of the Mutiny, followed by a crushing personal loss—died on 17th June shortly after his arrival in England. Lord Elgin—who had just returned from China, where his able diplomacy had secured to England the political fruits of an ably conducted war—succeeded to the Viceroyalty. He died suddenly, however, at Dharmsala, only twenty months after his arrival, on 20th November[1]—the day on which the Crag picquet was lost and gallantly regained, and on which General Chamber-

[1] 1863.

lain was wounded—and the Government of India fell temporarily into the hands of the Supreme Council sitting at Calcutta.

The situation at Ambeyla undoubtedly needed skilful statesmanship. The troops, dispatched more than a month previously to destroy the mountain fastnesses of an isolated group of rebels, had been "held up" on the outskirts of the hills by the unexpected hostility of local tribesmen. At the end of November it was not only likely that the flame of rebellion might spread along the frontier, but that Afghanistan might be involved. At that moment the General-less army—less than 6000 strong—lay on the slopes overlooking Ambeyla, while the heights above them, and the valley below, were occupied by some 15,000 turbulent and war-inured tribesmen. The winter, moreover, was at hand. This dilemma—the result of under-estimating the difficulties of the task, and of entrusting its execution to a numerically insufficient Force—could be met by two lines of action—(1) by so strengthening the Ambeyla Field Force as to enable it to destroy the Sitana-Malka rebels, and intimidate the hillsmen; or (2), by recalling it—the latter an act involving a loss of British prestige, with its fatal consequences on the frontier, in Afghanistan, and in India. Sinister rumour whispered that the latter policy was about to prevail, and brave men in camp stood aghast.

On the 21st November Sir Neville received a telegram from Sir Robert Montgomery authorising him to fall back should he deem such a step desirable. The wounded General replied that he considered such a step highly undesirable, and asked to be reinforced. On the 26th an order arrived from the Supreme Council directing him to withdraw his troops as soon as this was feasible from a military point of view: as this action was eminently unfeasible in his opinion, he remained where he was. "As a soldier and a General

in command of a Force," he wrote to his mother, "I felt that my own judgment was the only proper guide, and we continued successfully to defeat the enemy, keep ourselves in supplies and ammunition, send away our wounded, and keep open communications with the rear."

Fortunately the Commander-in-Chief—Sir Hugh Rose—who from the outset had protested against the dispatch of so small and inadequately equipped an expedition to an almost unknown and difficult country, in the late autumn—but whose counsel had been overruled by the civil authorities, for political reasons—not only lodged an energetic protest against the order promulgated by the Supreme Council, but immediately dispatched troops moving by forced marches to Sir Neville's assistance.

Happily, also, Lord Elgin's temporary successor, pending the arrival of the new Viceroy—Lord Lawrence—was Sir William Denison,[1] the Governor of Madras. This officer of Engineers—who was both a soldier and a statesman—immediately realised how disastrous would be the consequences of the withdrawal of the Force before it had accomplished its object, and he succeeded in persuading his colleagues to cancel their decision. "The first matter in which I had to take a strong line," he wrote to a private friend on 15th December, "was in inducing the Members of Council to rescind a resolution which they had previously affirmed, viz., that the troops should be withdrawn as soon as possible from the mountains where they are fighting. I pressed on them the impolicy and absurdity of this, and carried all with me except . . . so we have kept them up there, and they are to act on the offensive in a day or two, which, there is every reason to believe, will bring these people to their senses. But my wonder is that any military operation ever succeeds, there are so many people who

[1] Lieutenant-General Sir William Denison, R.E., K.C.B.

insist upon meddling. 'Move on,' says one; 'Stop a little,' says the other; 'Retreat,' says a third; and no one seems to think that he is making an ass of himself by attempting to direct operations in a country of which he is perfectly ignorant!"

Sir William's hopes were realised.

Reinforcements poured into camp; the 7th Royal Fusiliers, the 23rd Pioneers, 24th Panjab Native Infantry, the 93rd Highlanders, the 3rd Sikhs, and other Corps marched in, the British regiments bringing their bands with them, to the delight of all. The strength of the Force rose eventually to some 8000 men.

The camp now resounded with the tramp and cries of men in movement, music, and the skirling of pipes. "We are in boisterous spirits at the prospect of making a move," wrote Taylor on 6th December. "Such a hubbub —regiments coming, regiments going, spare stores and baggage moving to the rear, and all kinds of excitements and bewilderments. . . . We go light. I believe that officers are to be allowed half a mule each! What dirty fellows we shall be when we get back to civilisation! Half a mule will amount to a greatcoat, a pair of boots, cook-pot, and couple of blankets. We shall do well if it rains not, but, if it rain, we shall be in a pretty pickle!" And rain it did. From the 9th onward the weather begins to take an assured place in Taylor's daily letters. "Still rain, rain," he writes that day, "a heady, stormy, rainy night—a cold, windy, rainy day, and the snow close to us on the hills! The sun would be a welcome visitor. The natives find it trying, and so does the enemy, who is doing . . . nothing!"

Indeed, the Bunairwals, whose distrust and disaffection had given rise to all this trouble, were in a sorry plight. It was beginning to dawn on them that perhaps the Hindustani

fanatics had had some private end in view when they had drawn them into their quarrel, and had persuaded them that the object of the Ambeyla expedition was by no means merely the destruction of Malka, but the annexation of Bunair, Chambla, Swat, etc. *Their* territory had been the seat of war, and it was in *their* village that their allies had settled like locusts, eating their people out of house and home, intriguing, quarrelling, fighting, and then returning homeward to sow untrampled fields, leaving their hosts to face the white men, bury their dead, and pay the piper.

This was known to the British Political officers, and no surprise was felt when, on the 11th December, the Bunair headmen came into camp to know what terms they might make with the British Raj. It soon became evident, however, that though the Bunairwals might accept the British assurance that the transit of the Field Force through Bunair, Chambla, and Amazai territory to Malka would not be followed by wholesale annexations, their faith was not shared by their allies ; it was clear that a forward movement on our part would not be unopposed.

The Bunair Chiefs met this difficulty by offering to burn Malka themselves, and eject their allies—the rebels—if the British Force would remain *en masse* at Ambeyla. This proposal suited the British Government perfectly, and the following were the terms eventually agreed on :—(1) that a body of 2000 Bunairwals should destroy Malka, and should guarantee the expulsion from the country-side of the fanatics who had made it their stronghold ; (2) that this Bunair Force should be accompanied by British officers with an adequate escort, who would *see* the agreement carried out ; (3) that a fixed number of Bunair Chiefs should be left in camp as hostages until the safe return of the party from Malka. Having accepted these terms—as far as they themselves were concerned—the Chiefs returned next day to their

headquarters, with the object of obtaining the consent of their own people and of the Akhund of Swat, promising to return with the following dawn. The sun rose next morning and climbed the heavens; the Bunair Chiefs, however, did not appear, but sent a message asking for time.

It transpired, meanwhile, that Gazim Khan of Dir—a fighting man of repute, and a pretender to the throne of Swat—had arrived in Bunair territory while the headmen were conducting peace-negotiations in the British camp, and that he and his turbulent followers—fresh to the contest, high-spirited and fanatical—held that they could easily sweep the British army off the hillside; they had marched from their far-off valleys in order to do this, and shame would be theirs did they not make the attempt. They were resolute, therefore, in their opposition to any "white-livered" proposal to treat with the infidel, and carried the more martial of their allies with them—especially those who came from a distance. When the Bunair Chiefs reached the city, they found their people shouting for war, and got no hearing for their proposals.

General Garvock—well aware of the importance of time at this juncture, for the political condition of the frontier was critical, and outbreaks were occurring at Peshawar and elsewhere—acted immediately; leaving 3000 men only to defend the camp, he dispatched some 5000 men at dawn on the 15th against the enemy's positions on the right, with orders to occupy the neighbouring hills, to capture the Conical Hill—an isolated, precipitous, highly fortified cone-shaped height near the fortified hill-top village of Lalu—and then to take Lalu—which was held by some 4000 fighting men—and burn it.

These directions were gallantly executed: the 101st Fusiliers, supported by the fire of Mountain Batteries and

of musketry on neighbouring spurs, scaled the almost perpendicular sides of the Conical Hill—cliff by cliff, ledge by ledge—puffs of smoke, and the prostrate bodies of hillsmen and of men in red, lying among its prickly pears, marked their upward way. Near the top they rested to regain their breath and concentrate; and then, fixing bayonets, they dashed forward amid clouds of smoke, a hail of bullets, and showers of stones, and took the position. A splendid feat. Then followed a two-miles hot pursuit of the fugitives to Lalu, and the storming of the village; and presently a hill-top, spouting flames and smoke like a volcano, and red coats on the top of the Conical Hill, showed that the right area of conflict had fallen into British hands.

In the meantime the main body of the enemy's force, which lay in the valley—leaving Lalu and the posts in its neighbourhood to their fate—tried to interpose itself between our right column and our camp, and to attack the camp. This, however, they failed to do; three regiments charging down on them from the hills rolled them back. That night our men slept on the ground they had won.

Next morning an advance was made on Ambeyla and towards the Bunair pass. The enemy had taken up a strong position on the rough ground at the foot of the latter, and offered stout resistance. Many were the acts of gallantry performed on both sides. At one time, for instance, the 23rd Pioneers—who lost five officers in as many moments—gave way before a determined rush of Ghazis who advanced on them sword in hand, shouting and dancing; they were rallied by Major Roberts[1] and Major Wright, the Assistant Adjutant-General, who happened to be near, and, rushing forward, wiped out their assailants, not one of whom escaped. Again the troops slept where

[1] F.M. Earl Roberts, V.C.

they stood, their slumbers, the dim hill-sides, and dark sky, lurid with the glare of the leaping tongues of flame which were licking up the village which had been Ambeyla.

During that night Gazim Khan and what remained of his 5000 fighting men turned their footsteps homewards, and next morning the headmen of Bunair returned to camp, very humble, and very anxious to accept any terms the British Government might offer. Their previous vacillation had converted Lalu and Ambeyla into heaps of charred stones and smoking ashes, and had added hundreds to the number of their dead. They themselves, however, had been so obviously the victims of circumstances that it was felt that they had suffered enough; no penal addition was made, therefore, to the terms they had previously accepted—a grace for which they were exceedingly thankful. It was decided that on the 19th, at 10 a.m., 2000 Bunairs, the Guides, the Bunair Chiefs, and a handful of British officers, should start for Malka.

During this time of anxiety and excitement Taylor was exceedingly busy, and constantly on the move. The cold grey light preceding dawn frequently found him clattering down the way to Shirdarra, for his newly-made road was the highway along which regiments, guns, and supplies found their way into camp, and sometimes needed handling, especially after the rain set in; as also did the new road into the Chambla valley. Many, moreover, were the hours he spent with General Garvock, and much the time expended on the fortification of the new camp, the erection of breast-works, stockades, abattis, etc. Nor was he occupied with these strictly professional duties only: when actual fighting was going on, it would have been unnatural if he—an Irish-man—had not been in its midst. He was slightly wounded in the arm at the retaking of the Crag picquet on 20th November. On the 2nd December a bullet buzzed like a

determined cockchafer through the walls of the tent inside of which, warmly wrapped in a thick greatcoat, he was peaceably occupied with plans; it forced its way through the dense woollen folds of that garment, leaving a hole in the sleeve, but otherwise did no damage.

The corner in which his tent was pitched was not the quietest place in camp, for in its near neighbourhood rose canvasses sheltering his two young subalterns, Buster Browne, and the burly Blair, called 'Toony'—Little One—then in their early twenties, who were centres to which gravitated all that was young, and jolly, and noisy in the Force. From their tents sounds of revelry poured until the small hours of the night—to the annoyance of would-be sleepers—and streams of music also—oriental as well as occidental—for Buster had a beautiful voice and was an adept at mimicry. Thrumming on native instruments, he could reproduce the nasal falsetto of a nautch-girl, or the peculiar quality of a hillsman's cries and flourishes, to the life; indeed, many were the amusing incidents provoked by the latter accomplishment during a Frontier war which was already sufficiently sporting. Needless to say, these young bloods were always to the fore where fighting was to be had, and were sometimes found in places which were not theirs by right. On one occasion, for instance, Toony was discovered lightly clad in pyjamas and a pith helmet—a strange uniform—and armed with a sword only, in a deep nulla, into which he had fallen with three hillsmen; he was a fine swordsman, and had dispatched two, but the third was too much for him. A Gurkha with a kukri, however, came to his rescue—the incident occurred on the fringe of an encounter in force—and it was eventually discovered that the opponent against whom the most scientific cuts and thrusts had been of no avail was clad in chain armour. Taylor put Blair under arrest for that day's exploits, which were irregular in the

extreme; they provoked an observation from Sir Neville which was the delight of the younger subalterns—"I do not expect my officers to be gladiators." The good humour and high spirits of the gladiators—as Browne and Blair were henceforth called—were of appreciable value to the camp, however, especially when the autumn nights were long and wet, and cold, and reinforcements were long in coming. As for Taylor—he was a sound sleeper. He too had been young.

As Chief Engineer to the Force, Alex Taylor was one of the little group of officers who made the hazardous journey to Malka, which was the last act in the Ambeyla drama, and which Sir Hugh Rose condemned as culpably risky—crying out, when he heard of it, that it was madness, and that not "one of the party would come back alive." This, however, was not Taylor's view. "We are all well," he wrote to his wife on the eve of his departure on this mission, "and delighted to have brought affairs to so satisfactory an end. The Bunair Contingent come into camp to-morrow, and at 10 a.m. we march. The regiment going is the Guides; the officers are:—Reynell Taylor, Alex Taylor, Major Roberts, Major Johnstone of the Survey, and Lieutenant Carter; Major Wright (Assistant Adjutant-General).[1] We shall probably be five days away. The Force remains at Ambeyla until we return. We look forward to the trip as likely to be very interesting. . . . It is late at night, and I am sitting under a blanket stretched over a pole, writing by the help of a lantern—my object being to prevent the possibility of missing to-morrow's post."

At 10 a.m. next day, accordingly, the Malka party rode out of camp, in a downpour of rain. It was a curiously assorted cavalcade, and a much smaller one than had been

[1] To these names must be added those of the British officers of the Guides.

anticipated, for the Bunair headmen had arrived, not with the 2000 followers fixed by agreement, but with an escort of some sixty men; they would pick up the rest of their people *en route*, they said, but did not do so, having evidently agreed to rely on their prestige and personal influence rather than on a demonstration of strength. It rained so heavily all day, and the way was so rough that it was dusk before the mission reached the Amazai village of Kuria, only nine miles distant, where all the members of the party—men as well as officers—were hospitably received into Amazai houses; and very thankful they all were to find themselves beneath the warm shelter of roofs, and not in tents on a cold, wet, windy hill-side.

In the few hurried lines written to his wife from Kuria next day, Alex Taylor describes himself as "most comfortable"; but his standard must have been low, for he goes on to say that "the house in which he was sitting was so full of smoke, that to stand up was very painful to the eyes." "It is raining outside," he adds: "not a regular downpour, but a steady, quiet fall which looks as if it were in no hurry to stop." The party was detained in Kuria for some hours that morning, for the Amazai headmen who should have met it there were not forthcoming, and the Bunairwals were determined not to fight their way to Malka, but to go there, peaceably, *with* their allies. After a time the missing Chiefs came in, and the Bunairwals suggested that it would be well to start. It was Sunday, however, and Colonel Reynell Taylor and his brother-officers had arranged to read the Church Service together, the former officiating—he was as loyal a soldier of Christ as of the Queen. The Service in the little smoke-filled room completed, the bronzed men who had taken part in it rode forth on as perilous an adventure as was ever undertaken by Englishmen.

Rain fell heavily. The roads—mere slippery tracks—lay through dense fir-woods and steep, craggy uplands. Now and again the way was disputed by bands of wild, bearded cut-throats, with lowering faces. When these appeared, the Chiefs would ride forward, and parley, and presently their opponents—giving way sullenly—would vanish from among the trees and rocks in the midst of which they had appeared so abruptly. So many were these interruptions, and so difficult the precipitous way, that, though Malka was only twelve miles distant from Kuria the sun was sinking when the expedition reached its goal. The settlement turned out to be a clean new unfortified village, capable of accommodating some 1 500 men, with big barrack-like houses built round a square parade ground. Snow lay close above it, and during the night the ground was frozen hard; there was plenty of wood, however, huge fires were lit, and the men fared capitally.

At dawn both friends and foes were on their feet. Time pressed. The situation was perilous in the extreme. Malka was crowded with scowling hillsmen; they collected like flocks of wolves on the hillside. The little foreign Force was isolated, immensely outnumbered, and separated by twenty miles of difficult country from its supports. Its continued existence depended on the personality of its leader, Colonel Reynell Taylor, and the prestige of the Bunair headmen. It was still very early morning when some of the Amazai Chiefs came forward with the request that, whereas the Hindustani settlement at Malka should be destroyed, their own houses might be spared; in this they were backed by the Bunairwals, who were naturally anxious—in view of a future day of reckoning—to give their neighbours as little cause of offence as possible. Colonel Reynell Taylor refused, however. The Amazais had permitted our enemies to erect a stronghold on their

territory; it was our intention that that stronghold and its dependent buildings should sink in ashes to the ground—a symbol and a warning. "Our concern," wrote Reynell Taylor at the time, "was with the *whole* lodgment which had been a hot-bed of hostility towards us, and was quoted throughout the country as the headquarters of men who learned war in order to assail and injure us." The wooden houses of Malka were fired, therefore, "and the smoke of the burning village," he continues, "as it ascended to the skies in one great column was an unmistakable signal to the country round that our honour was avenged."

The sight, however, was not to the liking of the majority of its spectators. Hundreds of the Amazais left the village, and news came that they had united with the men of another tribe—the Muddakheyl—and were gathering in the valley below. Those who remained, surrounded Reynell Taylor, addressing him with cries and passionate gestures; he moved, however, with his usual gentle dignity in their midst, giving directions and apparently quite unconscious of danger. The tribesmen were face to face with a great opportunity. The acrid smoke of burning houses was in their nostrils and the fire of hatred in their hearts; they were present in their thousands, the number of the white men in their midst could be counted on one man's hands. Was this not destiny? The moment was critical; the scales hung at the balance. Menacing words were spoken. Then old Zaidulla Khan, one-eyed, one-handed, oldest of the Bunair headmen, stepped forward, and, taking his long grey beard into his only remaining hand, cried aloud—"We Bunairwals are answerable for the lives of these men. You can kill them; but you must kill us first."

His loyalty turned the scale.

Reynell Taylor's party turned their horses' heads safely from smoking Malka towards the Chambla valley. Not

unmolested, however; they were followed to Kuria by hundreds of scowling tribesmen; as before—their right of way was disputed by wild hillsmen, armed to the teeth; they were met in a narrow defile by a fanatic bearing a banner, who would have rushed on to them had he not been held back by his friends. A shot, the flash of a sabre, the sight of blood, and not one of those Englishmen would have reached Kuria alive. The prestige of the Chiefs, a certain awe of the *ikbal* of the white man, and a certain respect for his bearing carried the day. Nightfall saw the members of the expedition safely housed in Kuria, and on the following day they were welcomed—safe and sound—into the rejoicing camp. Their audacity had given the campaign its seal of success. Malka was burnt, and the war was at an end.

Before the month was out Taylor had rejoined his wife at Rawalpindi, where a son was born to him a few weeks later, and was named "Neville" after his godfather, General Sir Neville Chamberlain.

CHAPTER XXII

BLINDNESS—THE CONTROVERSY

THE year 1864 found Alex Taylor back on his Road, which had now passed into a late phase of its evolution. Long since roughed out as a whole, it was then receiving its last expensive touches, its bridges, and the like.

In March 1868, he became a Major-General.

A few months later he had the satisfaction of seeing the monument he had designed to perpetuate the memory of his friend, John Nicholson, rise on the crest of the Margala pass. "Lest we forget."

The opening months of the following year saw him again *en route* for England, not, however, as before, in light marching order, carrying only a portmanteau and a cheque-book, but travelling with a wife and four children, plus their impedimenta—an ayah, a goat, and other bulky belongings. A visit to a much-loved invalid sister-in-law at Mentone shortened the long sea-journey, much to the delight of the children, who, no longer cabined and confined, enjoyed the freedom of wild grassy terraces fragrant with rosemary and narcissi, and overhung by shimmering olives.

The discomfort of a dirty dusty journey from Marseilles to Newhaven linked that time of refreshing with an idyllic 1st of May, on which the bride of nine years previously once more found herself driving through deeply sunken

scented lanes, past familiar landmarks, and homely cottages in the doorways of which stood snowy-aproned curtseying friends, who would sometimes run to the carriage to shake hands, say a few heartfelt words in the slow Sussex dialect, and look at the children. Uphill and down they jolted, until at last the steep final ascent past Lady Ashburnham's Schools and the Almshouses was reached; the children were then allowed to get out and walk—ostensibly in the interest of the horses—and fill their hands with the things of beauty and of fragrance massed about the base of the hedges, much to their joy and to the detriment of the white raiment in which they were destined to appear before their grandparents.

Finally, however, the whole party—those who had remained in England and those who had wandered so far afield—found themselves together on the big lawn in front of the little old home—an emotional moment. The children marvelled at the tears which were shed: how could people cry, they wondered, in a country in which blue-bells grew in sheets in the woods, primroses and violets by the roadside, and cowslips in the fields? The new "grown-ups" to whom they were introduced that day played but a shadowy part in their consciousness, for they were filled with a heady rapture born of the quantity of flowers they had seen.

This furlough—which passed all too rapidly—was spent, after the manner of furloughs, first in resting, in soaking body and soul in the tranquillising atmosphere of home—England—then in visits to relations and old friends, and finally in the sad occupation of finding nests in which the children might be safely abandoned, that sad second chapter in Anglo-Indian married life. Nor was it unmarked by important domestic events. In 1869 Alex Taylor's clever and eccentric father—the only parent he had ever really

known—died in Dublin ; an unexpected loss. In the following year the story of his courtship and marriage repeated itself at Ashburnham. His youngest brother, Henry—then a young Captain in the Northumberland Fusiliers, who had been stationed in the Mauritius at the time of his brother's marriage—paid a visit to the Vicarage to make the acquaintance of his sister-in-law and her belongings ; like him, he was received by a bevy of charming hostesses ; and, like him, fell in love with one of them, Anna—who at the time of her sister's wedding was a school-girl in Germany—and, like him, succeeded in persuading the lady of his choice to accompany him to India, for which country his regiment was already under orders. Towards the end of 1870, therefore, another soldier's wedding took place in the beautiful country-church, and, after it, another bride and bridegroom turned their face Eastward.

Early in 1871, soon after the close of the Christmas holidays, came the sad day of parting ; the two boys—one of them Sir Neville's godson and namesake, a jolly, chubby fellow of only seven—were left in a clergyman's family, and the girl in a school near Brighton ; their common holiday-home being Ashburnham, and their witty grandmother their strict but enchanting guardian.

While these travelled, clever, but somewhat unlessoned children were being broken in—pleasantly enough—to their new mode of life, Alex Taylor, his wife, and little girl of three were hurrying across Germany to Brindisi, the events of the late Franco-Prussian war having made the usual journey across France impossible. While at Cologne they saw the French prisoners march in their thousands into the city. Snow lay on the ground ; the clothes of the defenders of a lost cause were ragged, their footgear worn out, their feet sometimes bare and bleeding ; icicles hung from their unkempt hair and beards. The hotel at which the travellers

stopped was full of French officers on parole ; but interested as Taylor would have been to learn the lessons of the war at first hand, the date of the departure of the ship from Brindisi permitted of no delay.

It was early spring when, arriving at Lahore, he began his close inspection of the long reaches of his Road—its bridges, etc.—and summer before he was able to join his wife and little girl in the chalet at Murree, now so enlarged as to be hardly recognisable as Lord Napier's quondam bachelor *pied-à-terre* in the hills. In its compound rose the office in which he worked unremittingly—with the exception of an occasional strenuous week's fishing on the Mahl, or Panch—and in which the accounts, estimates, and projects of the Panjab Public Works Department were elaborated and checked. In the following year he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Panjab—the office filled by Robert Napier on the annexation of the Panjab, twenty-two years previously—and was afterwards transferred, through the agency of his former Chief—now Lord Napier of Magdala and Commander-in-Chief in India—from the Civil to the Military Department of Public Works. His Excellency soon called him to Simla, to serve on the expert Committees engaged under his presidency in considering such questions as the defence of the frontier, the increasing of the efficiency of the troops, their better housing, etc., and thus once again came into close personal contact with the man of whose work he had approved so highly at Multan, on the Road, and at Lucknow. To Taylor, the renewal of so old and valued a relation under such happy conditions was an unmixed satisfaction. It was, however, rudely brought to an end.

The work had been heavy ; innumerable Committee-meetings added substantially to the weight of labour inseparable from his office of Chief Engineer of the Panjab—a

Province, be it remembered, the area of which is more than four times that of Scotland. This pressure was suddenly aggravated by a painful affection of the eyes, accompanied by severe headaches. In 1873 his suffering became so acute that he was obliged to leave Simla, and return to his home at Murree—temporarily, it was hoped.

His own personal experience preached caution in dealing with maladies of the eye. The sight of many of his Road-subalterns had been severely strained by exceptional exposure to tropical glare, and by the constant use, in the open, of glasses, theodolites, and other finely adjusted optical instruments. Indeed, it was a joke against him that he blinded his Staff, the members of which were advised to consider themselves fortunate if they succeeded in preserving an eye apiece. Henry Scott and James Browne belonged to the category of the one-eyed; while Chalmers of the Corps became quite blind, as did Toony Blair also, many years later—to quote examples at random. The sufferings endured by Lord Lawrence from the same source were notorious in the Panjab, though their sad issue had then not declared itself. But Alex Taylor had not to go so far afield to find a warning example—his younger sailor-brother, William, had been totally blinded by exposure to the sun when shipwrecked on the China Sea.

Clearly, sight was a gift which stood at the mercy of sun and dust, and which it behoved workers in India to safeguard jealously. He yielded implicit obedience, therefore, to his doctor's orders, sat in darkened rooms with bandaged and shaded eyes, and took air and exercise after sunset. His wife went nowhere, received no guests, and made her eyes a substitute for his: read his official papers to him for hours, marking each paragraph red, blue, or black, as he directed. Thus prepared, Taylor received his subordinates one by one, discussed the important points

with them, and finally issued his orders. This state of affairs clearly could not last long. The sufferer hoped against hope that his disablement was temporary, for before he had left Simla Lord Napier had asked him if he would undertake the office of Quarter-Master General, then held by Sir Edwin Johnson, who was destined to succeed shortly to the post of Adjutant-General. He had replied by a delighted affirmative. The Quarter-Master Generalship was then a far more important office than it subsequently became, and high military opportunities were likely to follow in its train.

When Lord Napier made this suggestion, he was consciously carrying out a design. He had had ample opportunities of forming an estimate of his subaltern's military capacity, and he appraised it highly. He was also aware that the devotion of his quondam roadmaker to his Road had stood in the way of his military advancement. He therefore purposely detached him from his Civil interests by transferring him to the military side of the Public Works Department, and intended to further secure his Military services to his country by following up this step in the way just stated. Fate, however, willed otherwise. When Alex Taylor received the official intimation of his designation to a post which opened to him so large and honourable a field of labour, and the possession of which would be a turning-point in a career largely devoted to Civil work, he was sitting with bandaged eyes in the dark. After sundown, guided by his wife's hand on his arm, he and she walked up and down the shadowy croquet lawn, discussing the line of action to be adopted. When they re-entered the house, he dictated a letter in which he explained his sad inability to take up the appointment, and asked for sick leave in order to put himself into the hands of a Continental expert.

He owed Lord Napier many of the openings of his life—the charge of the Multan flotilla when he was little more than a lad, the honour of leading the assault at the siege of Multan, the making of the Lahore-Peshawar Road, his position at Lucknow, and the honour of leading the attack on the Begam's Kothi. Never before had he failed to do honour to his Chief's confidence; now, however, he was obliged to yield to *force majeure*, and let the golden opportunity—which could never recur—pass by. The appointment which he was obliged to forego was given to Sir Frederick Roberts. The Afghan War followed shortly, and what the new Quarter-Master General then achieved is Imperial history.

"A Brevet Colonel (in 1858), with fifteen years' service, an established reputation for high military capacity, and judged by men like Lord Napier and Sir Henry Norman to be equal to rising to any call on his powers," writes Mr George Chesney in this connection in the *Pioneer Mail*, "Taylor seems to have been clearly marked out for the highest place in his profession"[1]; adding that, had he filled the office allotted him by the Commander-in-Chief at this critical juncture, his career—like those of his friends and contemporaries, Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Charles Brownlow, and Lord Roberts—would assuredly have been graced at its close by the crowning military honour, the Field-Marshal's baton. Be this as it may, the disappointment was a bitter one. At the time, however, it was almost lost in the shadow of the greatest of all personal calamities: blindness. The state of his eyes grew worse from day to day; contact with the feeblest ray of light inflicted agony. The Indian doctor's verdict was gloomy in the extreme. He had to face the possibility of a permanently darkened life.

[1] *Pioneer Mail*, March 1912.

The little party of three then turned their faces towards Europe. Their resting-place at Bombay would naturally have been Henry Graham's[1] big cool home on Malabar Hill, but as Mrs Graham and he were in England at the time, the travellers gratefully availed themselves of the hospitality of Alex Taylor's valued friend and brother-officer, Colonel Ballard, R.E.,[2] then Master of the Bombay Mint, whose wife was the sister of another dear comrade, Colin Scott-Moncrieff[3]—an officer whose name is now so honourably associated with the splendid irrigation of Egypt.

"As my Indian home was in Bombay," wrote Mrs Ballard many years later, "I did not have the honour of making Sir Alex's personal acquaintance—though I was familiar with his splendid public services—until he stayed under my roof when about to leave India, invalided because of failing eyesight. When he arrived with Lady Taylor his eyes were protected from every ray of light by bandages and green shades. Confronting him was the probability of total blindness. The excitement of the battlefield makes all things easy; but he was face to face with no exhilarating passing crisis, but with the prolonged loneliness and inactivity of a darkened life. Then it was that his courage and faith shone out. I was impressed by his unworldliness and noble simplicity. He did not talk much of sacred subjects, but one felt that he lived in an atmosphere of trust in God and confidence in His wisdom."

The specialist to whom Alex Taylor turned in this extremity was Dr Sanitætsrat Meurer of Wiesbaden. After having examined his eyes attentively, the oculist laughed. "Do away with those shades and bandages," he said; "there

[1] The late Surgeon-General Henry Graham, Assay Master, Bombay Mint.
[2] The late General John Archibald Ballard, R.E., C.B.
[3] Colonel Sir Colin Campbell Scott-Moncrieff, R.E., K.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

is nothing the matter with your eyesight; but you have had a narrow escape. There is a scar across the back of one eye, where there was an ulcer not long since. Nature has dealt with this! Strange! I attribute your marvellous recovery to your good health, to the sea journey, and to the fact that you have spared your eyes, and have shielded them from light. Had you gone on with shades and bandages, however, with your eyes in their present weak state, you must have become blind. Remain with me for a short strengthening treatment. Live simply, and in the open air; be much in woods and near the sea, and shortly both eyes will be quite strong." And as he said, so it was. And thus the dreaded calamity passed, traceless, away. "We rejoiced greatly," wrote Mrs Ballard, "when we heard that his sight had been restored. I do not doubt that the cure was greatly helped by his fortitude and calm faith. When I think of his recovery, I recall the words of John Bunyan: 'Now I saw in my dream that a hand was stretched out to the Pilgrim with some leaves of the Tree of Life, and he was healed immediately.'" Recollections of old boating days were green in Alex Taylor's heart; therefore, nothing loath, he hastened to hire a yacht in obedience to the oculist's directions, and soon the soft grey skies and moist air of Northern seas effaced the ravages of a tropical sun.

But man is born to trouble; no sooner was his health re-established, than that of his wife failed, and when, a few months later he was recalled to India to take part in the great Durbar of 1st January 1877 at Delhi—at which the Queen was proclaimed Empress of India—she was not well enough to accompany him. The day of parting was drawing near, and he was sitting in the sick room, bent on brightening hours which passed all too fast, when a packet of papers was put into his hands. It consisted of the proof-sheets

of Sir John Kaye's account of the siege of Delhi, and was accompanied by a courteous note in which the historian begged Colonel Taylor to let careful reading be followed by candid criticism. Delighted to have something with which to amuse the dear invalid, Alex Taylor began to read these pages aloud, and soon both reader and listener were carried into the land of surprise. It appeared that a controversy had been smouldering for some years, its subject being the authorship of the Plan of Attack by which Delhi had been taken nineteen years previously, and that one of the protagonists was—Alex Taylor.

Faint echoes of some such discussion had reached him in the past, but without awakening a spark of interest. Provincial feeling ran high in those days. The Panjabis—members of a Government consisting of men like Henry and John Lawrence, Robert Montgomery, Herbert Edwardes, Neville Chamberlain, and John Nicholson—held their heads high, and sometimes gave offence to their brethren of neighbouring jurisdictions, who too carried no mean banner. Taylor was a Panjabi; Baird Smith belonged to the North-West Provinces; there were officials in both Governments whose applause was reserved for men from their own country-side—not a sporting attitude, nor one to be respected. On the rare occasions on which militant friends had brought such rumours to Taylor's ears, he had smiled indulgently at Provinciality, and had assured his allies that Baird Smith had commanded the Corps and had borne the responsibility of all that was done. This said, he had dismissed the subject, not merely from discussion, but from his thoughts.

This, however, was different. That had been irresponsible gossip; this purported to be a reasoned statement of ascertained facts, and was incorrect, both in drawing and colour. Sir John Kaye asserted that the Plan was made by

Colonel Baird Smith at Roorkee, *before* he started for Delhi; adding, however, that the erection of No. 1 Battery, the key to the operations, was Taylor's "unaided idea," as also was the location of Battery No. 3—statements, the mutual incompatibility of which does not seem to have been observed by their maker.[1] Leaving logic aside, however, the historian's intention was clear. Taylor figured in his imagination as Baird Smith's able executive officer only. He is lavish in his praise of the young officer in this capacity, going so far as to qualify his activity as "almost divine." "Alex Taylor," he writes, "was the heart and soul of every movement—always cheery, always active, never sparing himself, inspiring, aiding, animating all by his noble example. It was impossible not to admire, not to endeavour to imitate him. He never complained, he never faltered, almost, it may be said, he never rested. He had the sole executive direction of all the Engineering Department of the Siege Batteries which opened the way to the interior of Delhi. The younger officers of the Engineers swore by him, and in truth there was something almost divine in his wonderful fertility of resource, and the self-sacrifice which he continually displayed."

But Taylor, who had done more—who had not only put the Plan into execution, but had conceived and elaborated it—was hurt. He not only had done excellent work, but had enjoyed and accepted its appreciation from men who knew, and whose approval was an honour. No healthy man

[1] The passage runs: "He (Taylor) had studied the ground well, and he had seized, with a quick soldierly eye, upon the exact points at which it would be desirable to erect our Batteries. It was a happy stroke of genius to surprise and divert the enemy by running up a Battery (No. 1) in a single night to play upon the Mori Bastion. It was Taylor's unaided idea, as was also the location of No. 3 Battery, the idea of which came suddenly upon him as inspiration, and was worked out with wonderful promptitude and effect." —Kaye, *Sepoy War*, iii. pp. 573-4.

accepts a wrong with equanimity ; to accept it at all is a *tour de force*. In this case, however, his instincts bade him leave the injustice unopposed, and to return the paper uncommented to Sir John Kaye—he was on the eve of returning to India, and the paucity of time at his disposal relieved this action from the stigma of discourtesy. After all, the all-important was that the thing had been done, that Delhi had been captured ; of whose brain and will and suffering that thing had been born was a secondary consideration.

This course—fine though she felt it in the abstract—by no means recommended itself to his sick wife, who even scented a little sentimental quixotry in the proposal. Truth is truth, after all, and desirable *per se*. How, she asked, would history be written if those who had first-hand knowledge withheld it from the historian? Finally, her husband agreed to send Sir John a plain statement of the facts of which he had personal cognisance, and which related chiefly to the inception and elaboration of the Plan of Attack. Nor did he do this only. The subject of the controversy had been the authorship of the Plan of Attack. He did not feel it right to elude this point. He had been asked for a *pronunciamiento* on the subject, and this he gave in language of no uncertain sound—his methods were always direct. It is worth while to give this trumpet-like communication—which took the form of a letter—in full, although passages from it have been quoted already.

After a few general remarks, dealing chiefly with the writer's reprobation of so "wretched and uncalled-for a controversy," he writes: "It is a marvel to me how any misunderstanding can have arisen as to what was Baird Smith's work and what was mine. He did all that could be expected of a Chief Engineer of great capacity but crippled by heavy sickness. Indeed, he did more—he was a

master of organisation, took a clear view of our position and requirements, gave firm and wise counsel to General Wilson, more than once, at very critical times, accepted and carried an immense load of the very heaviest responsibility, and, lastly, he provided the engineering means without which the work could not have been done. For all this grand work he deserves the thanks not only of the Delhi Field Force, but of every white face North of Delhi whose fate depended on our successes. This is enough for one man to have done, and he, sick and wounded.

But as fully as I give him credit for all this, so fully do I claim whatever credit may be due for planning and carrying out all the engineering operations from the time I arrived in June till the evening of the 20th September, except for a few days—15th and 16th September—when I was fairly worked out. It is work on a platform altogether lower than that on which Baird Smith worked, but not the less was it mine. It was also, as already said, work done at his risk and on his responsibility. He accepted the Project for the Attack; he pressed its acceptance on the General, and had we failed, he would undoubtedly have had to bear heavy blame.

What I have to say of the circumstances under which the Attack was planned I have said in the memo I enclose, which also contains some remarks on pages 574, 575, 576, and 577.

All I can now ask you to do is to read what I have written; by its light to re-consider the weight of the evidence you have hitherto accepted, and then to do what you think right. I am utterly at a loss to think how the straightforward, simple, and obvious relations that existed for so long between Baird Smith and me can have entangled themselves into the present knot.—Very sincerely yours,

"ALEX TAYLOR."

In a kind and frank reply Sir John invited discussion, but Taylor had come to the end of his tether. Having answered some direct questions, he said: "We fought then, not for personal ends, not for praise, but for the lives of our countrymen, helpless countrywomen, and children behind us in the North, and by God's blessing we succeeded. I have kept clear of this dispute for nineteen years, and now enter it through no wish of my own, but forced into it by the accident of your printed papers having been put into my hands, when I could no longer shut my ears and eyes. I have written as much in Baird Smith's interest as my own. His friends cannot wish his fair fame to be tarnished by anything being claimed for him which is not strictly his due."[1]

Once again Sir John addressed him, and once again Taylor answered his questions, adding—"You may say, if Baird Smith neither projected the 'Project' nor supervised the works, what did he do? An immensity. He was a tower of strength. If the proposals were not his own, he saw their fitness. Accepted them. Pressed them on the General. Acted on them. Kept the General straight. Made all the camp arrangements for working parties, and, finally, for the assaulting Columns also." "If any papers," he adds, "seem to point in a direction other than that I indicate, they are misleading you. The truth lies deeper—inquire further."

This done, he dismissed the subject from his mind, bade his wife farewell, and started for the East, visiting Malta and Aden *en route*, for he was now Deputy Inspector-General of Military Works in India and President of the Defence Committee of India, and was speedily immersed in arduous

[1] In the same letter he says: "The question having been raised . . . it became due, not only to myself, but to Baird Smith's memory, that I should do my best to have our respective works truly recorded."

and important work, which would have soon effaced the memory of an episode the recollection of which was irksome to him, had he been quite satisfied with his action in answering Sir John Kaye's letters. In so doing he had acted on the dictates of his intelligence, and against those of his instincts; he was convinced that he had done rightly, but the impression left on his nerves was painful.

His action was justified in after years by an old and chivalrous brother-officer—General Sir Frederick Maunsell—who, on being shown the correspondence with Sir John Kaye, wrote on the envelope in which he returned the letters, "Sir Alex Taylor's letters give the best evidence concerning his work during the siege. I knew him first at Multan and then at Delhi. These defensive replies were forced from him by those who demanded the facts from him directly. Never was he one to claim more than his due. At Delhi, he simply did as a duty what was laid on him, and humbly let others . . . take the credit and honour really due to him."

Taylor was a modest man, and the greeting with which he was familiar ran—"Friend, go higher." He was disconcerted by the reversal of the verdict of such men as John Lawrence, John Nicholson, and all his Corps-comrades at Delhi, by a man who had no personal knowledge of the circumstances he described.

The result of his letters was nil. When the third volume of the *Sepoy War*[1] appeared a month later, it was found that only a few words had been altered. It is impossible now to decide whether this was due to the advanced state of the actual printing of the text when Sir John put his last chapters into Alex Taylor's hands, or to the severe illness which prostrated their author at that date, or to the historian's not unnatural inaccessibility to a new point of view

[1] January 1876.

at the eleventh hour. Suffice it to say that before leaving England, Alex Taylor had asked to have his letters returned to his wife; they consequently never came into the possession of Colonel Malleson, who was so soon to take the torch from Sir John's failing hands. The short correspondence he had had with the latter left him a pleasant recollection of a gentlemanly and honest inquirer.

Taylor was human; occasionally irksome to him, therefore, must have been the knowledge that the most important service he was ever able to render his country was misrepresented in the text-book of the crisis which gave him this opportunity. He was very busy, however; his life was rich and happy, and his brain and heart were large enough and strong enough to view this contretemps in its true proportions. His comrades, however, felt the injustice keenly. "Certain historians," writes one of them—the late Major-General Charles Thomason—"whose account of the siege is biassed by the testimony of persons who were not present, and whose opinions were formed in defiance of those men who were, and who had exceptional opportunities of knowing the inner truth of what they saw, underline the statement that the *responsibility* for the Plan of Attack rested on the shoulders of the Chief Engineer. This is only partially true. I do not hesitate to affirm that, had the Plan failed, the *responsibility* for the disaster would not have rested solely on the shoulders of the Officer-in-Command, who, it was known, could have had but little to do with its initiation, having been confined to the camp through the greater part of the proceedings. It would certainly have been shared by his Second-in-Command, who was known to have formed the Plan on information collected by himself and his subordinates at the risk of their lives, and who put it into execution under the admiring eyes of the whole army. Great indignation was felt at the time on Taylor's behalf,

and many the voices raised, though not sufficiently loudly. We were not proficients in the art of advertisement; neither, in view of the fact that the truth was known to so many, did we attach sufficient importance to the circumstance that it was misrepresented by some. We treated the utterances of the insufficiently informed as a negligible quantity. That was our mistake."

The same disappointment was destined to fall to Alex Taylor's lot again, and in a ruder and more painful form. About a quarter of a century later it came to his knowledge that extracts from Colonel Baird Smith's private letters had been made public—letters which, torn from their context and presented to eyes other than those for which they had been written, gave an unworthy idea of the personality of the Chief Engineer at Delhi, and an untrue picture of his subaltern's work. On the old Town Hall at Nuremberg is placed the following maxim, in low German :—

"Ein Mans Red is' keene Red,
Man soll die Teele hören bed!"[1]

This elementary law of justice was ignored in this publication.

Alex Taylor's friend, Mrs Ballard, wrote to his daughter in after years: "I need not speak to you of your father's splendid public services, but one thing I wish to record as I had it from himself. You know that Colonel Baird Smith was Chief Engineer during the siege of Delhi. I remember him well. He was considered a man of great ability, and an exceptionally clever writer. He corresponded constantly with Lord Dalhousie, who had great confidence in his judgment, and I well remember hearing his letters to the late Governor-General read to friends in Scotland on the outbreak of the Mutiny. Long years after Colonel Baird

1 "One man's word is no word (evidence), both sides must be heard."

Smith had entered into rest your father told me—with regret—that injudicious friends had represented him and his Chief as rivals in the Service, and that this was not the case."

The contents of the book alluded to were brought to Taylor's notice by indignant friends, burning to intervene in his behalf. The idea of the existence of such a discussion was, however, eminently repugnant to him; it offended his taste, and he begged them to let well alone—how sternly, some alive remember.

He now learned that some of his dear old friends had been approached in this connection—in all good faith, doubtless—that efforts had been made to convert younger men to a less honourable view of his work of long ago, and, sensitive as he was, the unmixed joy of the memory of those strenuous, far-away days grew to be alloyed with a sense of insecurity and injustice. He delighted to collect old friends round his table as of yore, but he no longer frequented places where they foregathered in numbers. The Delhi Dinners—those annual gatherings of the fast-dwindling band of heroes in whose midst he had done such splendid service in the past—saw him no more. His friends reproached him: "Without you," one and another would cry, "it is *Hamlet* without Hamlet." Then the old man would pat his old comrade affectionately on the shoulder, and say . . . nothing; but when the festival recurred, he would stay quietly at home. Those who knew, understood why.

CHAPTER XXIII

MILITARY WORKS—RETIREMENT

On arrival in India, Alex Taylor took up his new appointments of Deputy Inspector-General of Military Works in India and President of the Defence of India Committee : two important newly-created posts—the one of large executive power, the other purely advisory—both of which dealt with similar problems and were born of necessities to the urgency of which the Government of India had but recently awakened. His permanent offices were in Simla, where he and his staff spent the summer, while the winter was occupied by tours of inspection of already existing defences, and by visits to places in which it was considered advisable to initiate new Military Works. The size of the country to be covered—the whole of India and Burma, an area of some 1,766,596 square miles, plus Aden and Perim —gives the measure of his journeyings.

His work was arduous. As Deputy Inspector-General of Military Works, it was his duty to organise, *ab initio*, a Department dealing with great issues, both internal and international ; to collect a competent staff of Engineers and draughtsmen ; to conduct surveys of harbours and of the country surrounding them, and to put both into a state of defence ; to visit and modernise ancient fortresses, scattered over the length and breadth of India ; to keep such strongholds as Delhi, Allahabad, Fort William, etc., up to

date; to strengthen the defences of the Afghan and Baluch frontiers; and, finally, to weave the defences of this vast empire into an organised whole by means of strategic railways designed to further the rapid mobilisation of large bodies of soldiers.

The work of the Defence Committee was advisory, as has been said, and more technical. The Committee itself consisted of a naval officer, Admiral Bythesea, V.C., C.B.; three Artillerymen—among them, Colonel Renny, V.C., the hero of one of the most gallant of the many gallant exploits of the gunners at Delhi[1]—and five officers of Engineers, a number which was afterwards raised to seven. The whole body worked under the inspiration and control of its President, who, shortly after his return to India, had received the honour of the Knight Companionship of the Bath.

This Committee occupied itself largely with the technical side of the defences of India, and was the referee to which the various Governments in India turned for expert information. Scientific fortification was its subject-matter, in elucidation of which models and large detailed drawings were prepared. "I am having models made of each unit of design as we get on," writes Sir Alex to his wife, "and so we are gradually getting together a very interesting collection of details of coast-batteries, guns, carriages, platforms, floors of kinds, platforms for carrying 800-lb. shells and acting as loading-stages, etc. . . . The subject is new in India, and we have had to do a deal of large detailed drawings. . . . We are now the referees of all India. Every question relating to fortifications is referred to us, at an early stage, for an opinion. . . . This is, I think, as it should be. We now know more about these subjects than anyone else in India. Altogether the Government is pleased with our work, and seems to marvel how it

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 218.

managed to get on in the past without our assistance! It is rumoured that the Committee is to be made a permanent institution with myself as permanent President, but rumours fly about nowadays, and very little confidence can be placed in them."

In the spring of 1878, he paid a flying visit to England to see his sick wife—who did not regain health as the doctors anticipated—to inspect the Island's coast fortifications and the works connected with them; and, once again, to visit Aden. He returned, with both ardour and information reinforced, to work, the large range of which is suggested in the following passage from a letter to his wife:—

"In consequence of my visit to Aden and to England this spring, I have revised our Aden proposals, and our project of last year is being re-drawn. The project for defending Calcutta is far advanced, and, as far as I can judge, many of the drawings and proposals made for it will apply to Rangoon also. The Royal Engineer from Bombay has not yet arrived. As soon as he does, we shall take up Karachi. I have quite made up my mind what should be done there, and do not doubt that the Committee will agree. So the Karachi-project may be considered well under weigh. Madras we cannot enter on until the Government of India has made up its mind what it is going to do in the matter of the harbour it has commenced. So, after Karachi, there will be nothing left but Bombay itself, and we shall be able to take it up as soon as we receive from the Bombay Government the different surveys we asked for last December. Each of these Projects involves much calculation and a deal of writing . . . so you can readily believe that our hands for this and the following year are full enough. Now I think you have a good idea of what we are at!"

In the spring of 1877 the Turco-Russian war broke out,

and in March 1878 was brought to a formal conclusion by the Treaty of St Stefano, in which the Turks accepted the terms offered them—at the point of the bayonet—by Russia. Great Britain, however, protested against the signing of this treaty —action which nearly involved her in war with Russia.

Alex Taylor sympathised ardently with the course taken by the Home Government at this crisis. "The fact is," he writes, "that every item of the treaty Russia has made with Turkey contains the germs of future trouble, and therefore it is useless—in the interests of peace—to agree to such an arrangement. If Russia, therefore, does not abandon her present position, war is inevitable. . . . India has received warning to see to her ports. Aden, Karachi, Bombay, Galle, Singapore, are all quite open to a Russian squadron. . . . Government wants something done sharp. Our permanent proposals do not, of course, meet the case, so we are designing away like mad. . . . We are doing our best to put some fortifications on our rivers. . . . At present I am engaged on the Hooghly for the defence of Calcutta, and on improvements of Fort William at Calcutta, improvements of Delhi, the defences of Bombay and Karachi, and am at work all day long. So weary I am by evening that I fall asleep at dinner."

Fortunately the combined diplomacy of Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield, sealed by the Treaty of Berlin, rendered the erection of these temporary defences unnecessary. The knowledge, however, of its unpreparedness —so rudely brought to the consciousness of the Indian Government by the near prospect of an armed invasion of its seaboard—bore salutary fruit.

Enough has been said to give the lay-reader an idea of the character of the work on which Alex Taylor was engaged. The above sketch of it cannot be more fitly closed than by the quotation of a few lines written by his successor, Colonel

Arthur Lang, C.B., a comrade and brother-officer who had won his affectionate regard many years previously, and whose gallantry at Delhi and Lucknow has been recorded here already. "The work was thoroughly organised," he writes, "and in full swing, when Sir Alex left Simla, in February, 1879. He had previously written to me in England to instruct me as to what to see and study in our most recent works of coast- and harbour-defence at Plymouth, Portsmouth, Spithead, Isle of Wight, etc.; and I had brought out drawings, etc., of the principal works, notes on them, etc. I met him at Bombay, where he went over the harbour and its approaches with me, visited the sites selected for fresh batteries, and generally explained all his proposals. I was surprised—though that is hardly the word to use!—at the intimate knowledge he had of every detail of the project, and the thorough soundness of his plan. That was the last of his work in India, and although, of course, the whole scheme of fortification for all India was not elaborated, the work was so very well started, and the good staff of workers so well trained, that it was comparatively easy for a successor to carry on his schemes."

The Russo-Afghan question loomed large and dark on the Indian horizon during Sir Alex's term of office at Simla, and naturally affected his work, not only on the seaboard, but on the North-West frontier.

As the barren mountains of a friendly Afghanistan formed an incomparable barrier against Russian aggression from the North, the British Government had long and consistently supported the cause of Afghan integrity and independence; and this, in spite of the action of the Amir, who, realising the strategic importance to England of a foothold in his country, was inclined to put an unreasonable price on his friendship. It will be remembered that the advance of Russian rule in Central Asia during the preceding

ten years had been of alarming rapidity. In 1868 Bokhara became a Russian dependency. In 1873 the Russians took Khiva and, in the following year, annexed the whole of the country between Khiva and the Atrek river.

With the Russians closing in on him to the North, and the British Empire overlapping what had once been the most Southerly of Afghan possessions, it was clear that the Amir, Sher Ali, would be wise to form a binding alliance with one or other of his European neighbours. He turned first to England, and endeavoured to obtain promises of British treasure, men, and arms, *without* giving the British Government knowledge or control of his use of them by the establishment of a British Consulship in Afghanistan. This attempt failing, he inaugurated a policy of duplicity and procrastination, coquetting with both Russia and England, his object being to get the balance of power into his own hands by playing the two countries one against the other. This attempt also ended in a fiasco, his diplomatic relations first with Lord Mayo and then with Lord Northbrook closing unsatisfactorily. In 1876, Lord Lytton was sent to India with instructions to offer the Amir British protection against foreign aggression, on condition that he received a British Envoy, not at Kabul—where the presence of a European in authority might be considered humiliating—but at Herat, or some such place. This condition was declined.

Sher Ali's chagrin at his failure to overreach two Viceroys found expression in renewed intrigues with Russia. These became inconvenient when England stood on the verge of war with that country in 1878. Lord Lytton was told, therefore, to force the Amir to commit himself, and thus to bring the Afghan question to a decisive conclusion. Diplomatic proceedings were in progress, when all Simla was startled to hear that for the first time in forty years a

Russian Embassy had been received at Kabul (August 1878). British prestige in India demanded an immediate counter-demonstration. Sir Neville Chamberlain was chosen as Envoy and dispatched to Kabul with a suitable escort and a strong Staff, in the ranks of which Louis Cavagnari and Maharaja Partab Singh of Jodhpur were conspicuous. The object of this Mission was to test the Amir's relations to the British Government: if it were received, well and good; if it were turned back, the reply to the insult would be war.

Sir Neville was convinced that this insult would be offered, and—being anxious to minimise its gravity as far as possible—sent Louis Cavagnari and Colonel Jenkins of the Guides with a picked escort as an advance party to feel the way. They had got to within a mile of Ali Masjid, when they were met by Afghan officers who informed Major Cavagnari that Faiz Muhammad, Commandant of the Afghan Army at Ali Masjid, was advancing to meet him, and on arrival at a certain ruined fort in the middle of a stream would send for him and three of his escort to hear their speech. Incensed by the tone of this message, Cavagnari, the fearless, spurred forward immediately, taking with him not three companions, but as many as he chose, and, riding past the ruined midstream fort—the site dictated by the Afghan—stopped at a watermill overshadowed by trees, where he awaited the Sirdar, and on the arrival of the latter brought matters to a swift conclusion. After the usual exchange of compliments, Cavagnari said: "We are both servants, you of the Amir of Kabul, I of the British Government. It is no use for us to discuss these matters. I only come to get a straight answer from you. Will you oppose the passage of the Mission by force?" The Sirdar said: "Yes, I will; and you may take it as a kindness, and because I remember friendship, that I do not fire upon you

for what you have done already." This said, the officers shook hands; Cavagnari and his escort remounted and rode off. Before they left, the Sirdar said again: "You have had a straight answer."[1]

War was declared immediately, and before two months were out the great strategic posts of Afghanistan were occupied by British troops. And three British Generals—General Donald Stewart, General Sam Browne, and General Fred Roberts—had won their laurels. Sher Ali died on 21st February 1879 at Mazar-i-sharif in Afghan Turkistan, whither he had fled.

In the following May Yakub Khan, who reigned in his father's stead, signed the Treaty of Gandamak, in which he put his foreign relations under British control, and consented to the permanent residence of a British Envoy at Kabul. British troops were then withdrawn, for it seemed that we had won all along the line; but what followed, no Englishman will forget.

In July Sir Louis Cavagnari, our Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary—a man of brilliant gifts and iron nerve—arrived at Kabul with a staff of three Englishmen and an escort of 200 Guides, and was hospitably received. He was soon aware, however, that there was treachery in the air. When told that local public opinion raged against the presence of the four white faces in the city, he replied with his usual nonchalance, "Barking dogs don't bite"—but he knew better, for he added, "Our deaths will be avenged." Indeed the perilous nature of the mission was a secret to no one. "Moriturus te saluto," he is reported to have said to the Viceroy when taking leave. The ominous words came true. On the 3rd of September the British Mission fell to a man, after a gallant and desperate defence—massacred by our allies. Another war and much bloodshed

[1] Colonel Jenkins' official report of this interview.

was the outcome of this treachery. The 17th October saw avenging British troops—led by General Roberts—in Kabul, and the 15th of October the reoccupation of Kandahar.

It was with almost passionate interest that Sir Alex watched the course of these events, in the earlier phase of which his boy's godfather played so dominating a rôle, and one which would have probably proved fatal had the first Mission reached Kabul. On the 9th of September, 1878, he writes: "Dear old Sir Neville Chamberlain started on his mission yesterday morning. On Saturday evening the Viceroy asked a few of his old friends—of whom I was one—to dinner, to bid him good-bye, and afterwards made one of his happy speeches, and I think meant every word he said."

It was with a thankful heart that he welcomed him back. "I have been to see Neville Chamberlain," he wrote to his wife; "he has had a bad attack of fever and ague, and is a good deal pulled down. He was very glad to see me, and as nearly put his arm round my neck as an Englishman could! I am very fond of him! I learned from him that when troops were being dispatched to Malta this spring I should have gone in command if a Division had been sent. Eventually a smaller Force went, and so a junior got the command. This is the first whisper on the subject that has reached me! Of course I am gratified, though nothing came of the intention."

Sir Alex's name had been spoken of in connection with other military commands which, had they been given to him, would have been very acceptable, for he was a soldier to his finger-tips. This, however, was not to be; his life had been largely devoted to Engineering proper, both Civil and Military, and he had had no experience in the actual handling of troops; still, the mere fact that in spite of this drawback such men as Lord Napier and Sir Neville

Chamberlain wished to give him important Military posts, shows how very high was the estimate of his capacity they had formed in the years gone by, when he had fought at their sides and lived with them in camps. Instead of Military opportunities, however, Lord Lytton offered to him the much-coveted post of Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department—the red ribbon of the Department in which he had worked all his life. With this appointment the Viceroy coupled another — the Presidency of the Defence Committee, which he pressed him to retain, doing so with all the grace of speech and manner which was his to so exceptional a degree.

Sir Alex's appointment was received with acclamation, not only in the Department and at headquarters, but by the public in India, to whom he was known "as a good administrator, as one of the best Engineers in India, and as one to whom England and India owed much." As for himself, his heart was full of thankful gladness. With the exception of occasional brilliant spells of active fighting, he had occupied himself for more than thirty years with problems of a uniform character, though on a gradually rising scale of importance. During these years of intimate and varied experiences, he had formed strong and tested opinions concerning the qualities, shortcomings, necessities, and administration of the Department of which he was about to become the head—opinions which it would be his privilege and duty to translate into facts when he entered into office.

The Department, fine as it was, was not without serious defects; he was touched and gratified by the openly expressed belief in his exceptional fitness to deal with these: "You and you only," was the burden of a number of the many congratulatory letters which poured in on him. A piece of private good fortune added its touch of personal happiness

to his satisfaction in the opportunities for great public service which had opened up before him: he learned that his wife's health had so improved that her doctors had given her permission to rejoin him in India.

Early in December 1879, he and the Secretary to the Defence Committee, Major Pierson, R.E., visited Burma in order to form a scheme for the defence of Rangoon and Moulmein against naval attack. He was moving quickly from place to place, and remained away longer than was anticipated, with the result—a big packet of home letters, nearly three weeks' arrears—which greeted him when, full of the pleasure of taking up his new work on New Year's Day, he arrived at Calcutta on 30th December. Each of these letters, as he opened it, was heavy with domestic trouble. Evidently his presence in England was urgently needed.

He shut himself into his room for twenty-four hours, thought the matter out, and early next morning telegraphed his resignation of the post which would have given him power and opportunity to do his country services which were on a level with his long experience and trained abilities. He had arrived at Calcutta at the end of 1879, a man in high and responsible office, whose life had been a long succession of solid achievements and whose future still offered attractive perspectives of Imperial service. The dawn of the New Year 1880 saw him one of the unemployed—and this in the heyday of both strength and ability. With one stroke of the pen he had stripped himself of everything. It is difficult to imagine what quixotry of thought tempted him to this decision. Suffice it to say, that his motives were noble.

From Calcutta he travelled to Simla, where he spent more than a month in completing various schemes for Imperial Defence of which he had been the initiator and moving spirit. In February he turned his back on India

for ever, with something like relief. "The edge of the wrench is getting blunted, and I shall soon be accustomed to look at my work as a thing of the past—nothing dulls the ache of pain better than change of scene," he wrote.

"Sir Alex Taylor," writes the *Pioneer*, "is now on his way home, and the troops of friends he is leaving behind him in India will be heartily wishing him happiness. When he was lately appointed Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department we referred to the services by which his Indian career has been distinguished. The cordiality with which members of his own Corps are always ready to enlarge on these is an evidence of qualities which cannot be recorded in Hart."

CHAPTER XXIV

COOPERS HILL

On arrival in England Sir Alex settled temporarily with his family in London, where he found many an old friend known under very different conditions—Lord Napier, Sir Robert Montgomery, Sir Henry Yule, Sir Richard Temple, and others—in whose friendship he found needed consolation; for though he put a brave face on it, he was, undeniably, very miserable. His life-work had been suddenly arrested while in full activity, and the shock had been great. His training had been Indian exclusively; it would be difficult, he knew, to find occupation in England which would be complementary to his work in the past. Had he worked through his time of office as Secretary to Government in the Public Works Department he would probably have become on retirement a Member of the Council of India in England; but this was now out of the question. He was not in sympathy with English public life; its democratic setting was exceedingly distasteful to him, and it is doubtful whether he could ever have submitted to its conditions. His heart was heavy, therefore; and, in proportion to its heaviness was the relief with which he entered on the last phase of his public service, the Presidency of the Royal Indian Engineering College, Coopers Hill, which was offered to him in 1880; a position for which he was peculiarly fitted both by his

personality, which was exceedingly attractive to young men, and by his long connection with Indian Public Works.

The early history of the College is interesting; it had its roots in conditions obtaining in India at the time of its foundation and previously.

As the Western man—whose ideal of civilisation is based on the exploitation of the material resources of the country he inhabits—got a closer and closer grip of India, the demands on the Department dealing with Public Works naturally increased. Roads and canals on an imposing scale had been made and were still in process of construction; but the mid-Victorian era had seen the inauguration and rapid expansion of swifter means of transport. Railways in India date from 1853. Their construction was at first largely entrusted to subsidised Companies. This arrangement proved costly and otherwise unsatisfactory, and in 1870 the Government of India adopted the policy of constructing and working all railways through the direct agency of the State—an immense accession to its duties.

It was evident, also, that the Irrigation works of the future would be on a constantly increasing scale. India contains large desert-areas, arid because waterless; and also mighty rivers, which pour millions of cubic feet of water per second into the sea, water which, if applied to purposes of irrigation, would make the desert bloom like a garden. It was felt that this waste was a slur on the domestic economy of the country, and that the future of canal-making was endless. With the commercial development of the country and the growth of great trading centres came the necessity for rapid exchange of information. The burden of work laid on the Telegraph Department became very great. Famines had been scourges before which administrators trembled; it was clear that

the construction of the above public utilities would be a profitable mode of both famine-relief and famine-prevention. Evidently, the general trend of progress necessitated the development of a larger and more comprehensive system of Public Works.

Speaking generally, India had been conquered—little by little—by the British army; it was in the nature of things, therefore, that the first steps in its material development should have been taken by the Engineers on the spot, *i.e.* the Company's Military Engineers; and splendid was the work they had done.

As time went on, however, and public demands increased, it was found necessary to supplement the services of the Royal (Bengal) Engineers by those of Civil Engineers proper. In 1858 Lord Stanley[1]—who had carried the Bill for the transference of the Government of India from the hands of the E. I. Company to those of the Crown, and was then the first Secretary of State for India—founded a service of Indian Engineers called Stanley Engineers after their founder. It was composed of men who had passed the test of examinations, and had worked for four years in the offices and workshops of great civil engineers at home. It soon appeared that the equipment of these recruits was very unequal—some were men of trained ability, who have since risen to the highest posts in the Department, but others were not on the same professional level, and it became only too clear that a man might have passed a qualifying examination—especially if judiciously crammed—without becoming either a good engineer or a desirable member of a great Public Department.

There was, moreover, a difficulty in getting sufficient recruits, for it was no easy matter for a young English Engineer to get an adequate training in those days. Before

[1] Afterwards 15th Earl of Derby (1826–1893).

1872 there was no Engineering College in England, though Engineering Departments had been attached to a few Colleges. There were Chairs of Engineering at Glasgow and Edinburgh; a good school, for that date, at Dublin; Engineering classes at Cork and Galway; and a very recently founded Engineering Department at Owens College, Manchester;[1] these were all in their infancy, and none had what would now be regarded as a reasonable Staff or suitable equipment. In short, there was a deficiency of trained recruits, this deficit being largely due to the absence of an Institution in which they might be educated.

These circumstances gave rise to a growing wish for the foundation of an Engineering College in England, which would stand to the members of the Public Works Department in the relation formerly held by Haileybury to the members of the Civil Service, and by Woolwich and Chatham to the Royal Engineers and Artillerymen, and the certificated output of which would be men who had received a uniform training on lines determined by experts, and had been welded into corporate unity by common education and common associations before their arrival in India.

The establishment of such a College was favourably discussed at the India Office under the ægis of the Duke of Argyll (Secretary of State for India 1868–74); and, in 1869, a proposal was drafted and submitted to the Viceroy and Members of Council in India. It was, however, most unfavourably received at a meeting convened for its consideration at Simla. Evidently, the existence of the proposed College—valuable as it might prove to the Public Works Department—was prejudicial to various established interests. Many were the points of view of its

[1] Engineering Departments were opened at University College and King's College (London) in 1872. The first Engineering Laboratory in England was established at University College in 1878.

enemies. Lord Mayo urged the case of the Universities and educational establishments of Great Britain which had already established Chairs of Engineering, advocating the policy of supporting existing institutions rather than that of starting new ones, *ab initio*. Others objected to the creation of a new privileged service at a time when the democratic spirit demanded the extinction of privilege; while others again—exponents of a less modern phase of thought—stood aghast at the prospect of an absolute divorce between power and patronage. "Why," cried one of these, "if every service is to be entered by competitive examination, we shall soon have Lieutenant Governors without an appointment in their gift!" Neither was it in the nature of things that the Royal Engineers should give enthusiastic support to a scheme, the realisation of which would tend to force them out of a Department in which they had done such honourable service in the past.

Colonel George Chesney, R.E.—an officer of statesman-like intelligence, untiring energy, and great administrative power, who had already taken a leading part in this movement—had been asked to undertake the initiation and organisation of the proposed College, should the Duke of Argyll's project be put into effect. He was present at this meeting, and marshalled the arguments in favour of the scheme at some length, but, he feared, with little effect. "I expected criticism, or only cold support," he notes in his diary, "but not the determined opposition I encountered. It is hardly likely that the India Office will persist in the teeth of the Government of India, especially as I hear that the Council was not unanimous." It was his opinion, evidently, that the proposal was doomed; in this he was mistaken, however: his advocacy carried the day. He was informed next morning that the Council of India had signified its approval both of the India Office

scheme and of his appointment as first President of the proposed Institution.

Surprised and pleased, he started immediately for England, under the impression that the battle had been won, and that he could enter straightway on to the field of his labours. An error: what had been carried was but an outpost; the battle was still to be fought. He found the protagonists of threatened British interests drawn up in phalanx.

Foremost amongst these was Mr Fawcett, the Postmaster-General, whose interest in Indian affairs had earned him the sobriquet of "Member for India," and who, with his usual chivalrous regard for the weak, had taken the Indian ryot under his wing. He protested against the iniquity of forcing Indians to pay for the education of the English Engineer destined to develop lands which were theirs by right of birth, and espoused the cause of existing Chairs and Colleges, to the prospects of which the proposed College could not fail to be prejudicial.

Associated with him was Lord Stanley, now Lord Derby and Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, who was eloquent in defence of the Institution he represented; his eloquence was discredited, however, by a paper in which Colonel Chesney showed that that University had provided India with three successful Engineers during the course of nine years, an output which hardly justified the sacrifice of a great Indian Department to its preservation.

Mr Gladstone also was hostile, and this, like Mr Fawcett, in the supposed interest of the poor Indian taxpayer—the individual who would profit most from a thoroughly efficient Public Works Department.

In spite of much organised opposition, however, the Duke of Argyll stood stoutly to his colours.

While the Olympians were engaged on deciding whether

they would allow the College to come into existence or not, Colonel Chesney looked for its site; studied the organisation of English Universities—a task in which he was privileged to have the guidance and help of Mr Talbot,[1] then Warden of Keble—and prepared himself for the difficult task of forming the Staff on which the success of the College of the future would ultimately depend.

The housing of the Institution proved a considerable difficulty: many were the orphanages, lunatic asylums, and big hotels—among the latter, the Star and Garter, Richmond—which George Chesney visited in the hope that their inhabitants would vacate in his favour should the shells they occupied prove suitable to his purpose. Months passed, however, and the desired site was yet to find. On a hot August day, however, when boating down the Thames, he saw a large building crest the wooded ridge overhanging the classic reaches which connect old Windsor with Runnymede; he was told that this was Coopers Hill, a palatial country-house built by the financier, Baron Albert Grant, and then for sale. He landed immediately, visited the place, and decided then and there that this was the ideal site for the College of the future.

Meanwhile, he saw to his dismay that matters had taken a very unfavourable turn in high places; how unfavourable is shown by the following entries in his diary:—

"August 15th (1871). Lord Lansdowne's Committee have written to propose that the College-project be suspended.

"August 22nd. The Duke fears that opposition will be too great. He has sent Fawcett's letter to Mr Gladstone, who expresses doubts and fears:—1st, of the Royal Engineers, 2nd, of the Civil Engineers, and 3rd, of the Schools and Colleges.

[1] The present Bishop of Winchester.

"August 29th. Bubble burst. After writing numerous letters to tell people that the Prospectus will soon be out, I hear, on going into B's rooms, that all is stopped.

"The Duke has heard from Lord Halifax, and is afraid that he will not get the support of Cabinet, and so must stop!

"August 30th. Write to people to say that College is 'off.'"

But the sky soon brightened.

On September 29th he writes:—"Attack on College by Mr Williamson (Dublin).

"October 24th. Mr Gladstone inveighs against 'tax-supported Institutions.'

"October 26th. Happy surprise; Wyatt[1] strongly advises purchase of Cooper's Hill. Designs rooms."

And finally, on November 7th. "The Duke comes out of the Cabinet, and tells me that the Council have sanctioned his going on with the College."

Eagerly availing himself of this unexpectedly happy turn of events, George Chesney bent himself to his task with such energy that in less than ten months the great architectural changes incident on the transformation of a large country-house into a great educational establishment were roughly complete: a new wing had been built, a fine Staff collected, a curriculum established, students got together, and the big building furnished, provided with servants, etc. On the 5th August 1872, the Duke of Argyll—accompanied by a brilliant assemblage of the past and future rulers of India—opened the College which he had called into being.

The enterprise on which George Chesney had embarked was one of exceeding difficulty. Coopers Hill was an Institution of a new type in this country. Its curriculum, its methods, and its traditions had all to be established. Its

[1] Sir Digby Wyatt, Architect.

Staff had no experience in dealing with the special educational problems which they had been set to solve, and the range and scope of the proper theoretical training for Engineers had not then been studied. Its President, moreover, aimed not only at creating a body of highly-trained Engineers to serve as a stout arm of the Public Service, but at evoking the soul which would be its true *esprit de corps*. Without energy and ability no work is possible. George Chesney looked for energy and ability; but he looked for finer things—for disinterested service, for patriotism, and for pride of race, with its corollary, *noblesse oblige*.

Knowing the power of a name and great traditions to keep men loyal to their true selves, he took pains to bring the Corps of the future, with its traditions to make, into line with his own Corps, with its long and honourable history of self-devotion. He wished the Coopers Hill men in India to be called "Royal Indian Engineers," not "Civil Engineers," a colourless word, descriptive of a profession rather than of an organism. This wish was not wholly realised; Coopers Hill men did not write R.I.E. after their names as he had hoped. His College, however, was called the Royal Indian Engineering College; and the name may be taken as a symbol of the ideal he was endeavouring to make a reality: a civil pendant to the Corps of Royal Engineers; *i.e.* a body of men—gentlemen of God's making and man's—whose lives were dedicated to service in a great Eastern Empire, the inhabitants of which look to Englishmen not only for intelligence, but for character — integrity, chivalry, and a delicate sense of personal honour.

It was from this point of view, as well as from that of intellectual efficiency, that he selected his Staff. His selection justified itself. Seldom has a group of learned men

set their disciples purer examples of disinterested ability. A man of versatile intelligence and wide intellectual sympathies—a soldier who read his classics in the original, and was familiar with modern continental literature; a lover of pictures and music, and deeply interested in the latest phases of science and sociology—George Chesney's relations to these men of his choice were of the happiest, and quite untainted by any trace of militarism, the curse of educational Institutions with soldiers at their head. He never thought of his Professors as subordinates, but as colleagues, expert fellow-workers in a common cause; and in return they gave him that loyal and heartfelt admiration which men give only to those who enter intelligently and sympathetically into their intellectual lives. His power of work, thoroughness, and devotion to duty were exceptional. For instance: during his Presidency he submitted himself to a regular and systematic study of Mechanics, Calculus, and Analytic Geometry, in order to be in a position to judge of the character of the mathematical work done in the College. Each day he submitted his list of questions and examples to his Professor—questions which he had succeeded in solving either wholly or partially, and questions in which he had failed—and this practically throughout his Presidency. To these mathematical studies he added that of German, in which he desired to be more proficient.

His most effective collaborator in the difficult task of spiritualising a material undertaking was his wife. Clever, intuitive, with a genius for admiration, she not only understood but loved the qualities of the scholars for whom she kept open house, and befriended them in the most homely fashions during the long period of acute discomfort necessarily attendant on the occupation of a house under process of organic transformation. Her large party of little boys and girls, moreover, were attractive items in the lives of her

men of science. But the Professors were not the only recipients of her sympathetic affection; her heart went out to the clever and inexperienced lads—they called themselves "men"—whom her husband was training, and who, with the happy instinctive confidence of youth, entrusted her with the full tale of their callow ideals, and were sent on their way strengthened and comforted, as many a man now in high position in India will remember.

Such was the beginning of Coopers Hill. Never, perhaps, was institution launched and kept afloat in a more unworldly and patriotic spirit.

The burden of organisation, teaching, and government lying on George Chesney's shoulders was at first very heavy; but as the machine was gradually perfected and began to function automatically, his work grew lighter; he was able to hunt regularly; his active brain flowered into a novel, *The Dilemma*, less brilliant, but still a worthy successor to his inimitable *Battle of Dorking*, the progenitor of numerous imitations; and finally—eight years after the opening of the College, years during which it had established itself on such wide foundations as to stand four-square to all the winds that blow, a proved success—he was summoned to India in 1880 as Military Secretary to the Government of India, becoming a member of the Governor-General's Council in 1886.

Before leaving he was asked if he could recommend a successor. This question remained unanswered for some months; the Institution was entering on troubled waters—that he knew—and would need a good head and firm hand at the wheel; he was also anxious to find someone who saw eye to eye with himself in essentials, and would cherish the simple public-spirit which was the keynote of the social fabric he had raised. He heard one day that Alex Taylor had suddenly retired. The two officers had served

together at Delhi, but their paths had lain apart since then. The possibility of Sir Alex's accepting the vacant post flashed through his mind, and he wrote at once to make the suggestion, following up his note by a visit. Before paying this call he spoke of his idea to a friend; the latter shook his head dubiously. "Too old," he said, "too old—hasn't got the physical energy"; and Chesney remembered with a shock that more than two decades had slipped by since those Delhi days.

On approaching an eminence in the neighbourhood of Surbiton where Sir Alex was staying, he saw a stalwart figure and two smaller ones speeding down the slope, each perched on the summit of one of those alarmingly tall and slender wheels which preceded the modern cycle. Suddenly the largest of these machines shot forward, and, gathering momentum on its downward course, dashed past: a flash of spokes, and a cry—"Field! field!" As no one was foolhardy enough to obey this adjuration, the rider steered for a crossway hedge, breasted it, parted company with his machine, and landed gracefully on the other side. This was Taylor, who was being initiated by his boys into the art of bicycle-riding. The episode lasted a moment only, but long enough to settle the question of "physical energy."

Sir Alex declined the proposed appointment, however. He was a soldier and a man of action—"I am no schoolmaster; I have no gift that way," he said, as he shook hands with his departing guest. But George Chesney would take no refusal. The more he saw of his old friend the more sure was he that he had found the "very man." He got him to stay at Coopers Hill, arranged that he should be relieved of the duty of lecturing, introduced him to the place and people—to the river, the workshops, the professors, and to the students; describing him to the latter, in an inaugural address, as the man "without whom Delhi would not have been

taken."[1] Gradually the full scope and importance of the work revealed itself, and Sir Alex eventually accepted the responsibility of forming the young men to whom the future would allot rôles similar to those he himself had played for so many years in the civil administration of the Panjab.

November 5th, 1880, saw him and his family established at Coopers Hill, his home for the next sixteen years.

The site of the College was incomparable, both from the point of view of beauty and of historical associations.

The garden was already celebrated in the reign of Charles II., when Denham sang its praise. The eye could range from its ancient cedar-shadowed lawns, gemmed in spring with blazing rhododendrons, across the rounded tree-tops of Windsor Park, to the romantic castellated home of England's kings; and, beyond the castle again, to the pale shafts of Eton Chapel. Or—if the spectator changed his position—it might sweep across historic Runnymede, the winding Thames, and mile after mile of cloud-flecked meadow-land, to where a spire-crowned hill—Harrow—rises on the far horizon; or—again changing direction—to another eminence, on which a building of fairy-like name, but unromantic associations—the Crystal Palace,—

[1] In a letter written from Peshawar in 1859, by General Pollard, R.E.—then a Captain—to his mother, Mrs Pollard of Castlepollard, West Meath, asking her to show hospitality to his wounded comrade, Alex Taylor, the writer describes his friend as "a man of intense energy never overcome by any difficulty, but always attaining his object by indomitable resolution." "Sir John Lawrence selected him to undertake the Engineering operations at Delhi," he adds, "and although nominally only Second in Command, he was the planner of the siege, which he carried out as he has his every undertaking. Anyone who knows anything about the siege will tell you that it was Nicholson and Taylor who took Delhi." He then goes on to speak of the two officers as "fast friends and kindred spirits," and quotes Nicholson's well-known appreciation of his services. "He is moreover one of the kindest and most agreeable people you could meet, a great sportsman, and delights in every kind of fun—fishing, shooting, hunting—nothing comes amiss to him"; so he concludes.

indistinguishable throughout the day, would blaze like a beacon at sun-down.

In this lovely English setting Sir Alex embarked on his new work, which, though light, needed tact and head, and in which his collaborators were not the men of action trained in the school of large responsibilities and danger to whom he was accustomed, but chiefly men of books, civilians trained in the lecture-room and laboratory.

Hardly in this latter category, however, was his senior Professor, Calcott Reilly, Professor of Engineering, a man in whom exceptional ability and an unbending will were united to the guilelessness of a generous child, and this although his feet were familiar with some of the roughest of the world's ways. He had run away from home as a boy, and, little more than a child, had endured the brutalities of the hard life before the mast of some seventy years ago. As a youth—realising that knowledge is power, and that he was ignorant—he had had the grit to educate himself and to earn his living, simultaneously: to spend his days in the workshop of the Engineer to whom he had articled himself, and the greater parts of his nights in the unaided study of such subjects as Analytic Geometry, Mechanics, and the Calculus. He reaped his reward: ere long his was the voice to which men listened in the discussion at the Institution of Civil Engineers on the practical application of mathematical principles, to him were awarded the Telford Medal and Telford Premium, and in time he came to be regarded in the Profession not only as a high authority on bridge-designing, but as a representative of the purely scientific work of the Engineer.

"His whole soul," writes a colleague in an appreciation published at the time of his death, "was devoted to the attainment of the best scientific knowledge . . . whether it had a present appearance of practical utility or not." After

emphasising the essentially idealistic character of his striving, the writer continues: "Every species of human work possesses a purely spiritual element of this kind, which is in reality a condition of human advancement"; adding, "the lesson is one for which there is great need in an Institution like ours, where there is naturally a tendency to limit attention to the utility of the moment." It was as a scientific Engineer that Sir George Chesney persuaded him to become the Chief of his Staff, and—foregoing pecuniary gain—to devote himself to the task of revealing the noblest aspects of their Profession to the future creators of the Public Works of India.

Such was the Engineer; and as the Engineer such was the human being—an idealist. The following trait may be taken as a symbol of the man. His life had been spent in the midst of roaring furnaces, glowing metals, and the smell of oil; he loved grace and peace, and longed for contact with beautiful objects. His taste was distinguished, he could rest content with nothing that was not the best of its kind. Pictures and statuary were beyond his means. He bought books, therefore, things of beauty—Rogers' *Italy* with Turner's engravings, Ruskin's Works with their incomparable illustrations—these and the like filled his shelves; and he wrapped his treasures in covers of the finest tooling, the *ne plus ultra* of the bookbinders' art. There are many to whom his study is still a living memory. It is with emotion that they recall the wide-spreading English prospect commanded by its big curved window, and remember its book-lined walls and the spectacled, shaggy-bearded man in their midst, who handled his treasures with a lover's touch, and sometimes—reluctantly—pressed them on privileged friends.

To the students, his relation was that of a helper; he called their education "spoon-feeding"—as indeed it was,

in comparison with his—but handled the spoon himself, right willingly; while the kindness and hospitality he and his North-country wife lavished on them was unbounded. He had his quaint ways too. For instance: his sense of courtesy impelled him to say "Good morning" to each of his students as they filed into his lecture-room; some, however, were always late, and, as to greet them would be to interrupt the thread of his discourse, he wrote "G. M." (good morning) on his blackboard, and would point to these cabalistic letters, without suspending his lecture, when the laggards crept in. A lovable man.

A note of very different quality was struck by Professor Wolstonholme, M.A., Sc.D., Professor of Mathematics, Fellow of Christ's College, and sometime Fellow of St John's College, Cambridge; author of *Mathematical Problems*, *Seven Figure Logarithms*, etc.; and one of the most distinguished mathematicians of his day. Kindly, witty, illusive, he drifted through the College practically unknown, even to his colleagues. An omnivorous novel-reader—bad and good, all was grist that came to his mill, but good only were the books which held their places on his shelves, and these he was glad to lend—it was said of him that he knew the names of every race-horse and jockey in England, and of celebrated cup-winners the history unto the third and fourth generation, and this although he never betted and seldom went to a race-meeting—a significant survival of earlier tastes. This paradoxical being was tantalising, for he would sometimes lift the veil behind which he lived, and reveal the delightful conversationalist one had always divined; but, in the minds of most, his was merely a middle-aged, stooping, slippered figure in a straw hat and blazer, who, pipe-in-mouth and eyes-on-book, might be daily seen butting helplessly into the taut tennis-net which seemed forever to impede his passage across the lawn. Enigmatic, unknown,

he flitted with his family from Coopers Hill without a farewell, and not long afterwards slipped out of life, bequeathing his acquaintances a regretful sense of having been daunted into leaving a gold-mine unexploited.[1]

Socially illusive, also, was Professor Unwin,[2] Professor of Hydraulic Engineering, son of the well-known Nonconformist, William Unwin, LL.D., of Homerton College. A man of great intellectual power, who has since filled the highest posts in the domain of Scientific Engineering: kind, shy, fastidious, inaccessible, and yet an admirable friend, the fineness of his fibre imposed itself on all, no one showed him any but their best self. It was with real regret that Sir Alex parted with him, after fifteen years' collaboration, in the interest of the London and City Guilds Technical College; and it was with pride that he saw him take his seat on the Council of the greatest Scientific Societies of Britain,[3] and finally fill the seat of the President of the Institute of Civil Engineers.

Professor Unwin was succeeded in 1884 by Professor Hearson, previously Instructor in Applied Mechanics at the Royal Naval College. A man of learning and an experienced teacher, he combined theoretical knowledge with practical ability, and was the holder of the Gold Medal of the Society of Arts given for inventions. Gentle, benevolent, determined, a confirmed optimist and obviously able, his mere presence proclaimed a personality on which one might

[1] Professor Wolstonholme was succeeded by Professor Lodge, M.A., late Faraday Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, and brother of Sir Oliver Lodge.

[2] Professor W. Cawthorpe Unwin, LL.D. (Edinburgh); F.R.S.; M.Inst.C.E.; Hon. Life Member Inst.M.E.; Hon.Memb.Am.Soc.M.E.; Hon.Assoc.R.Inst.B.Architects; Professor Emeritus Central Technical College, City and Guilds of London Institute.

[3] President, Section G, Royal Association 1892. On the Council of the Royal Society. On the Senate of London University. President of the Inst.C.E.

safely build. Sir Alex always felt that his character and professional ability were valuable assets to the College.

To this group of men—who, with the exception of Professor Hearson, belonged to Sir George Chesney's original Staff—two very dissimilar personalities must be added—Professor McLeod and Professor Minchin[1]; the former a chemist of distinction, a Fellow of the Royal Society, a High-Churchman and a Tory, and, in all paths of life, a follower of the most orthodox of the strictest sects of orthodoxy; the latter a whimsical, paradoxical, emotional Celt, a professed disciple of all the unorthodoxies, who admitted no allegiance to any laws save those promulgated by his own fine intelligence and his own generous heart.

A mathematician, physicist, and metaphysician, trained at Trinity College, Dublin, and gifted with the persuasive speech and imagination of his race—Professor Minchin's Lectures on Applied Mathematics were masterpieces of lucidity. It was, however, in lectures of a very different character—at which the astonished aborigines of the country-side were allowed to assist—that the full flavour of the man revealed itself; the flavour of the race of Mr Bernard Shaw. Treating his raw material—any recent social or political event—in the spirit of a Rabelais or a Swift, he tilted against humbug, unmasked accepted respectabilities, overwhelmed dishonesty with innuendo and invective, pelted it with nicknames born of insight and contempt, bewildered his audience with witty paradox seasoned with laughter, and finally—having tossed the souls of his hearers from surprise to surprise—sent his audience out into the night ejaculating, "How brilliant!" but as bewildered and mystified as if they had been watching a conjurer—to find on awakening next morning that some of their dearest prejudices had been laughed out of court. A true Celt.

[1] Professor Minchin, M.A., F.R.S.

No suggestion of his personality would be complete without reference to his passion for birds. The appeal of that particular blend of delicate beauty, helplessness, and gallantry common to feathered things was irresistible to him. Many were the fledglings, children of misfortune, adopted by him at spring-time, and great their demands on his time and devotion. He was a troublesome guest, who invariably arrived late for dinner—if at all,—but to have kept a bird waiting for its food was a crime which no one could justly lay at his door. As a tutor, he was both protective and indulgent: he gave his "men" that for which they asked, even when it was bad for them, for he held that *experientia docet*; and he intervened strenuously between them and punishment, for, with the constitutional melancholy of his people, he thought life itself a sufficient scourge without artificial aggravation. If it be added that he had a pretty gift of caustic humour and was an admirable tennis-player, it will be understood that he was popular.

This, however, was his holiday side—recreation. A constant and ardent devotee of Scientific Research, his life in the main was spent in the laboratory, that austere workshop which may at any moment become a presence-chamber in which the worker suddenly finds himself confronted with an august and hitherto unknown verity. The subjects he pursued were after his own heart. In the Coopers Hill Laboratory he made the first electrical measurements of the light of the fixed stars and planets by means of an invention of his own—the photo-electric selenium cell. These tiny cells have the extraordinary property of generating electric currents under the action of incident light—the practical interest of this fact being the far-away possibility that the rays of the tropical sun may be seized some day, imprisoned, and utilised.

In addition to these cells he constructed others which

not only respond to light, but have a further romantic property—they get tired and cease to act, but revive and continue to generate electricity under the stimulus of the impact of vibrations so subtle that they can be set up and conveyed by the utterance of words. Not every word is effective, and not every tone: both must be right. It is intelligible that the romance of this discovery was not left unexploited by this fantastic Irishman. Professor Minchin —like Edgar Allan Poe interrogating the Raven for news of his lost Lenore—would play on his cell with vocables of which the result was a foregone conclusion. It needed masterful management: of caressing, wheedling tones it took no notice, but to a man standing at a suitable distance, with his face turned towards it, uttering words of power—words with strongly-marked labials and gutturals—its response was immediate. It was an experience in Wonderland to stand in that dim bare room, with its stone tables and delicate scientific apparatus, while the Professor—white-haired though young, collarless, and wearing an old College blazer—pleaded and coaxed uselessly in the darkness, then suddenly, raising his voice in terrific adjuration, thundered: "Hear my voice, O Balaam, hearken unto me, thou son of Zip-por!" No notice was taken of any sound until "por" was pronounced; then came the response—the deflection of a needle. This impulsion cell was the first "coherer," or receiver, of wireless signals sent from a distance by Hertz waves, and is identical in operation with those now in use.

Professor Minchin also worked on the problem of photo-electricity, with the object of producing photographic images at a distance by means of electric currents, and on the cognate subject of wireless telegraphy. In the course of the latter research he succeeded in receiving electric wireless signals through the walls of the Physical Laboratory

from an induction-coil placed in a cricket-field some yards distant. Unfortunately his experiments were conducted with a horizontal receiving-wire and not with the vertical wire adopted by Marconi, otherwise his wireless signals would undoubtedly have been received at distances measured in miles instead of in yards some four or five years before wireless telegraphy became a commercialised concern.

Such were the Senior Professors inherited from his predecessor by Sir Alex—men of personal charm and disinterested enthusiasms, of whose scientific attainments he and the College were justly proud.

To their number the names of three soldiers must be added, and that of a civilian who was a soldier both at heart and in practice :—Colonel Edgcome, R.E. ; Colonel Courtney, R.E. ; Lieutenant Clarke, R.E. ; and Mr Eagles, B.A.

Colonel Edgcome and Colonel Courtney[1] were in charge of the Survey Department ; the latter—a man of society and a courtier by instinct—presided over the College festivities, balls, sports, and the like, to which he gave a certain cachet which it was important should be imprinted from the outset on the hospitalities and the functions of an Institution which was designed to take the place beside others of older standing. Lieutenant George Clarke—subsequently Governor of Victoria, and afterwards of Bombay, now Lord Sydenham, then Professor of Practical Geometry and Engineering Drawing in the College—was already a marked man ; he had passed first, both into Woolwich and out of it ; on leaving Coopers Hill he distinguished himself in politico-military employ in Egypt, on the Continent, and in America ; and was a leading spirit on the Army Re-organisation Committees and Committees of National Defence.

[1] Major-General Edward Courtney, C.V.O., late Governor of the Military Knights of Windsor.

COOPERS HILL STAFF, 1882.

Prof. Unwin. Mr Pasco, R.N. Mr Whiffin, R.N. Mr Heath.
Prof. Stocker. Prof. Wolstonholme. Sir Alex Taylor. Prof. Reilly. Col. Edgcome.

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His honours reflect his versatility :—G.C.M.G, G.C.I.E., and F.R.S.

Mr Eagles[1] shone among the members of the Professional Staff as a man of action, and of pleasure too, in the best sense of the word. Endowed with a keen intelligence and exceptional mathematical ability, his blunt common-sense, high principles, and *joie de vivre*, made him an effective influence for good among the students, with whose holiday-life he identified himself. He commanded the Coopers Hill Company of the Berkshire Volunteers, was one of the best shots in the College Rifle Team, was the life and soul of the College Boating Club and coached the College fours and eights. His hospitality was unbounded, and his company of the best. He died twenty-one years ago (1892); but the hearts of many friends still soften when they think of "Tommy Eagles," with his generous heart, his strong ready helping hand, his open purse, his laugh, his song, his racy tongue, and his untarnished honour.[2]

Of the students more need not be said than that in 1880 they were 130 strong, clean-limbed, upright young men—some abler than others,—whose interest in Applied Mechanics and the Calculus was less apparent than their pleasure in football and boating, but whose after records show that they were more intimate with the former than they then cared to acknowledge. Prominent among those who have since risen to eminence in their profession are :—Sir T. R. Wynne, K.C.I.E., now President of the Railway

[1] T. E. Eagles, M.A. (Queen's College, Cambridge), Instructor at Coopers Hill in Architectural and Geometrical Drawing. Publications :—*Constructive Geometry of Plane Surfaces; Descriptive Geometry;* etc.

[2] Other members of Sir George Chesney's Staff :—Instructor of Descriptive Engineering, Mr Heath ; Secretary, Mr Whiffin, R.N. ; Bursar, Mr Pasco, R.N., grandson of the Lieutenant Pasco who signalled "England expects every man to do his duty" ; Chaplain, the Rev. Charles Crosleigh, D.D.

Board of India; Sir Lionel Jacob, K.C.S.I., who served for twenty-eight years in the Panjab Irrigation Works, during which he carried through the great Chenab canal-projects; he was afterwards Chief Engineer of Burma, then Inspector-General of Irrigation and Secretary in the Public Works Department, and finally, Secretary in the Public Works Department for all its branches; and Sir John Benton, K.C.I.E., Fellow of Coopers Hill College—described by Dr Unwin at a public dinner as "the greatest Irrigation engineer India has ever had,"—who has performed the almost unimaginable feat of carrying the Lower Bari Doab Canal—a volume of water ten times greater than that of the Thames at Windsor—across the Ravi, a river which at flood-time has a width of from one to three miles—a Work which will convert 1,650,000 acres of desert into a fertile land supporting a teeming and prosperous population, and is expected to yield a revenue of 39 lakhs of rupees yearly (£260,000). Beside these there are many others, who, though less fortunate in obtaining official recognition, have done brilliant and honoured work in the Department.

When Sir George Chesney persuaded Sir Alex Taylor to undertake the Presidency of Coopers Hill he knew that the College was embarking on a crucial phase of its existence, When it was founded in 1870–71, the Government of India informed the Secretary of State in Council that the number of recruits needed by the Public Works Department would be from forty to fifty yearly, and it held to this figure, although reminded that such an annual accession was far in excess of the vacancies then occurring in a Service the total strength of which was some 1000 men, including both Royal and Civil Engineers. In obedience to these instructions—which seemed to show that the Government had great Indian Public Works in view—and to the decision

that the proposed College-course should cover three years, Sir George Chesney organised the College on a scale which permitted the maintenance and education of a maximum of 150 students at a time.

Two circumstances, however, combined to negative this expected Departmental expansion :—the depreciation of the rupee, which seriously hampered Indian finance, and the successful recrudescence of the theory that the construction and administration of railways should be outside the sphere of official control. This opinion was immensely reinforced by the accession to power in England of the Liberal Party, which figured in India as the protector of the rights of private enterprise. In accordance with this theory, said Sir Guilford Molesworth in his Presidential address at the Institution of Civil Engineers (1904) "it was laid down as an axiom by the Secretary of State for India that the Government should divest itself of the task of making railways. This change of policy was carried out, notwithstanding the strong objections that were raised by the expert-advisers to the Government."

The result of the consequent curtailment of the enterprises entrusted to the Public Works Department was a Service overstocked with officers—a block, in short. This misfortune could be met only by reducing the number of recruits accepted, which was gradually done ; in 1880 the College entries had fallen from fifty to twenty men yearly.

Sir Alex, therefore, was confronted with the task of running a College organised to meet the needs of 150 students—and to be financed by their fees[1]—on an income of considerably less than half the amount anticipated ; and this for masters who made the financial independence of the Institution a *sine quâ non*. The Government of India had never been sanguine in this direction, even when it

[1] £150 a year, a net income of £22,500 a year.

was asking for fifty men a year; and, from the outset, had been careful to underline its wishes in the matter. "We shall look," it wrote to the Secretary of State for India, "with great concern on any arrangements that will lead to considerable outlay either on salaries for the educational Staff, or for buildings, which shall not be either fully, or almost entirely, covered by the contributions received from the students. The Institution, in short, would in our judgment be *distinctly condemned if it could not be conducted on what would be an entirely self-supporting basis.*"

The situation in 1880 could be met only by so enlarging the scope of the education given as to attract students other than those to whom Indian appointments had been promised.[1] It was arranged, therefore, that whereas former students had entered by a competitive examination, the passing of which practically secured them an Indian appointment at the end of three years—or rather four, for one year's practical course at some great engineering works was soon added to the years of residence at Coopers Hill—the College would be open in future to all those who passed a qualifying examination; and that the competitive examinations for Government appointments should not take place until the end of the three years' course,—the appointments themselves partaking of the nature of prizes. Coopers Hill, therefore, no longer existed solely to provide the Government of India with Civil Engineers, though it was the sole source whence that Government might draw them. It had become a training ground for Engineers in general, special attention being paid, however, to the peculiar requirements of India.

This change of policy had the desired effect of increasing the number of entries, but not on a sufficient scale. It was necessary to have recourse to other expedients.

The College was made the training ground for other

Indian Governmental Departments, *i.e.* for the Telegraph and Forest Departments: the former in 1878—that is during Sir George Chesney's régime—the latter in 1885. On several occasions Sir Alex was asked to nominate men from among the Coopers Hill students to his own Corps, and to the Royal Garrison Artillery, the Royal Field Artillery, and the Royal Horse Artillery; more than forty such appointments were made on his recommendation during his Presidency.

Further, a number—rather more than thirty Coopers Hill men—were either posted directly to the Egyptian Public Works Department, or lent to it by the Government of India.

"Egypt is second only to India," writes a highly-placed member of the British Government in Egypt, more than two decades later, "in its indebtedness to Coopers Hill for a body of men in the public service whose professional qualifications, loyalty to their employers, and devotion to duty have set the standard for one of the most important State Departments. The special qualities of enthusiasm, integrity, simplicity of purpose, and *esprit de corps* so characteristic of the College, and so largely due to Sir Alex's influence, are plainly noticeable among Coopers Hill men in Egypt, and though they cannot lay claim to any special share in the most famous of the great Irrigation works in that country, which were mainly designed and executed by an earlier generation, it is largely by them that the magnificent and complicated system of water-distribution, with its innumerable ramifications of minor works, is now carried on, with a self-sacrificing zeal and keen sympathy with the people of the country that is the admiration of all who are in a position to appreciate it."

Amongst the Coopers Hill men of eminence in Egypt who belonged to Sir Alex's time are Sir Arthur Webb,

K.C.M.G., who was closely associated with the building of the famous Assouan Dam, the late J. K. Verschoyle, C.M.G. (Inspector-General of Irrigation), and C. E. Dupuis—from 1909 to 1912 Adviser to the Ministry of Public Works—who was more particularly associated with the earlier studies of the Upper Nile and the institution of a branch of the Egyptian Irrigation service at Khartoum.

Coopers Hill men were also lent in the same way to the Governments of Assam, Burma, Cyprus, and elsewhere, and to Native States—Kashmir, Jodhpur, Rajputana, Kotah, and others.

As time went on, the Coopers Hill education justified itself so amply, and its scholars made themselves so exceedingly desirable a reputation, that its diplomas were an almost sure pass to employment. Many were the applications received by Sir Alex from foreign Governments, more especially from those of South America, and from the Directors of Private Companies—such as the Uganda Railway Works, on which his men were well represented,—they gradually came, moreover, to fill many of the higher positions on the great Indian Railways.

All this involved much time-consuming correspondence. His efforts, however, were so far successful that, from 1887 to 1893, the College was either absolutely self-supporting, or practically so, the deficit being a negligible quantity.

This result was partly due to the following successful commercial enterprise. For many years the large quantities of railway-materials sent to India for the Government railways had been systematically tested in London by various testing laboratories—both in respect to mechanical properties and chemical composition—in order to ensure their efficiency.

As the Mechanical Laboratory possessed a very fine ten-

sile testing-machine, it was suggested that this work might be undertaken by the College at the ordinary fees, and thus not only assist the finances of the College, but be of educational service to the students. This work was commenced under Professor Unwin, and continued with most satisfactory results under Professor Hearson.

Mechanical testing having proved so great a success, it was decided to undertake the chemical analysis of the materials used on the Indian State Railways. A special Chemical Laboratory attached to Professor McLeod's Department was fitted up, and work was commenced in January 1886 under the charge of Mr Arnold Philip, now Chemist to the Admiralty. He was succeeded in 1902 by Mr F. W. Harbord—who had long been occupied in work connected with the testing and analysis of steel and of the various other materials used by Railway Companies—under whose able and energetic guidance the work increased so greatly that considerable additions to the Laboratory had to be built and the Staff largely augmented. The profits derived from the Mechanical and Chemical Testing Laboratories were considerable; they averaged £1200 a year for a number of years, and, owing to the great increase of work, afterwards considerably exceeded this figure.

The School of Forestry, on the other hand, far from being a financial aid, was—at first—an additional expense; to the College only, be it understood, not to the Government of India, which it supplied with competent Forest officers —an abundant source of future revenue. To the College, however, was debited the cost of constructing necessary buildings—museum, lecture-rooms, etc.—and of financing the Staff of experts needed to do justice to special subject-matter. These expenses were heavy and the number of entries small—five during the first year—a number, however, which rose in time to forty-three. Its Director never doubted

its eventual financial success; though the feat of paying its way is not one usually required of an educational establishment—the Colleges of Oxford, Cambridge, London, Edinburgh and Glasgow are either richly endowed or partially supported by rates.

The establishment of a School of Forestry at Coopers Hill is hardly intelligible without a glance at the history of forestry in India.

The importance of forestry to a continent ill-provided with coal, and therefore dependent on its woodlands for fuel and building-materials, was obvious to the Government of India; attempts to organise a Department entrusted with its care had, however, been intermittent and ineffectual. The annexation of Pegu (1852), with its immense teak-woods, brought the question to the front.

Lord Dalhousie—determining that so great a source of revenue should not be recklessly exploited by traders, but should enrich the public treasury—placed these forests under the control of officials; with unsatisfactory results, however. What he wanted was a trained Conservator of Forests, but no such Englishman existed; for England—with her ample rainfall, her coal-mines which supplied her with fuel, and her ships which put the forests of other countries at her disposal—had not been forced by necessity to make a special study of woodcraft. Lamenting the quandary at a dinner-party at Government House, he exclaimed: "Could I but find the man!" Lady Havelock—*cherchez la femme*—who was sitting next to him, replied—"Perhaps I can help you. My sister[1] has married a German Professor of Botany at Bonn, Dr Dietrich Brandis; he is able, clever, energetic. I know him, and I believe that he is just what you want." Lord Dalhousie was aware that Germany—having little coal and

[1] Lady Havelock and Frau Brandis were daughters of the celebrated Indian missionary and historian, Dr Marshman.

a relatively small seaboard, and being dependent therefore on home-produce for fuel and timber—had splendid Schools of Forestry, and pursued the clue. Report and his University spoke golden things of Lady Havelock's brother-in-law, and to him the post of Superintendent of the Pegu Teak Forests was eventually offered, to the delight of the young *privat docent.*

Dr Dietrich Brandis arrived in India early in 1856, bubbling over with enthusiasm and plans. Lord Dalhousie was delighted with him—"If you realise an eighth of your proposals, you will do well!" he said, and shipped him off to Burma; his belongings following in a later ship. The latter was wrecked, and his books and herbarium sent to the bottom of the sea, a misfortune which he interpreted as an intimation that Forestry should replace Botany in his life, and, though he could have wished that the form of the communication had been less peremptory, he accepted it loyally. Indeed, the task he had undertaken needed a single eye—it was immense. Grappling with it immediately, he provided himself with tents and servants, and disappeared on a solitary tour of inspection of his tropical charge—a virgin-forest some 70,000 square miles in extent—work which had to be done either on horseback, or on foot, in a hot, moist atmosphere dancing with stinging insects. Eight months later—having taken a bird's-eye view of his domain, and decided on his methods—he reappeared in civilisation; and immediately embarked on a campaign against British timber-merchants, who—declaring that the supply of teak-timber from the forests was inexhaustible—insisted on their right to treat it as common property, like air or water. He carried the day, after a battle-royal which lasted some years, during which he was strenuously supported by Col. Phayre,[1] Commissioner of Pegu, and Captain Henry Yule, R.E., who

[1] Sir Arthur Phayre.

had been Secretary to the British Mission to Ava in 1855. Were the British Empire indebted to its German Forest-Conservator for nothing but the salvation of the teak-forests of Burma, its obligation would still be heavy.

In 1857—a year after his arrival in the East—the forests of Burma were placed under his control, and in 1864 the woods of India came under his sway: he was appointed first British Inspector-General of Forests. With his usual energy, he immediately set to work to inaugurate systematic forest-management on scientific principles:—a regular Department was created and a forest law passed. The latter provided for the demarcation and control of State forests which cover an area of 239,000 square miles, or one-fourth of the whole of British India. A gigantic task. So far he had worked with a Staff of such imperfectly-trained assistants as the Indian Government could provide; he now felt the need of expert help, and for this he turned—*per forza*, for there was still no School of Forestry in England—to his native land, from which he drew one of the great Professor Heyer's most brilliant disciples, Dr William Schlich, and also Mr B. Ribbentrop, both of whom have splendidly justified his choice, being first his able adjutants, and then his worthy successors. The practical result of their common work is suggested by the following figures. The net revenue yielded by Indian forests in 1864 was £40,000; in 1904 this figure had risen to £660,000; to which must be added produce which is valued at a very large figure and given gratuitously to the natives every year.

Quite phenomenal were both the quantity and the quality of the work accomplished by this founder and organiser of the Department of Indian Forestry. He lived for it, and expected others to do the same; and though some complained of the strain put on them, he was seldom disappointed, for his ardour was infectious. His constitution

was of iron, and he strained it to the utmost; no eight-hours working-day for him—sixteen was his allowance, meals being regarded as negligible interruptions. A strenuous worker, an ardent devotee of his profession, a protector of the natives of India—to whose needs and rights, to whose prejudices even, he was very sensitive—Sir Dietrich Brandis[1] has left an honoured name in a country which he never adopted as his own, but for which he did unique and memorable service.

When—after years of varied experience in Burma, Sind, Bengal, and the Panjab—Dr Schlich succeeded his compatriot as head of the Department, he inherited a field of labour which had been plotted out by a man of genius, but was in a state of imperfect development. Fortunately, the needed work of expansion and re-organisation demanded qualities which the new Inspector-General possessed to a remarkable degree—tact, determination, the capacity for persistent and unostentatious work, and the power of forming calm and wide judgments.

The chief obstacle to progress lay in the absence of expert workers. In 1866, Sir Dietrich Brandis had obtained permission to have a certain number of young Englishmen trained on the Continent,[2] and in 1878 he had founded a school for the education of the lower grades of forest officials at Dehra Dun, in India. Still, education in Forestry was woefully deficient, and Dr Schlich was strongly of opinion that existing needs could only be met by the foundation of a scientific school for the purpose in England.

Sir Alex Taylor's proposal that such a school should be engrafted on the already existing Royal Engineering College met with approval, and Dr Schlich was deputed by the India Office to found and organise the first faculty of

[1] Sir Dietrich Brandis, K.C.I.E., F.R.S., F.L.S., F.R.G.S., LL.D.

[2] At Nancy, under the guidance of Colonel Pearson, R.E.

Forestry in Great Britain. With the assistance of Sir Joseph Hooker,[1] then Director of the Botanical Gardens at Kew, and with Sir Alex Taylor's approval, he secured the services of three able and distinguished collaborators—Dr Marshall Ward,[2] Dr Shipley,[3] and Mr Fisher, the latter formerly Director of the School at Dehra Dun. For some time, Sir Dietrich Brandis also took the Coopers Hill men yearly for a three months' tour of instruction through certain scientifically managed forests of France and Germany.

The work thus initiated progressed steadily, and now, thanks to Sir Dietrich Brandis and Sir William Schlich,[4] the Forest Department of India is for ever independent of foreign assistance. It has its own regular establishment of two hundred highly-trained English specialists, more than 1000 educated native officials, and some 10,000 trained native subordinates. Sir William Schlich's first three pupils at Coopers Hill now control the Department in India.[5]

In view of the fact that the net yearly revenue resulting from Departmental-labours amounted in 1912 to nearly a million sterling, it is hardly decorous of the Indian Government to reckon the few hundred pounds which it may have contributed to the education of its Foresters at Coopers Hill as a *loss*.[6]

No sketch of the Coopers Hill School of Forestry would

[1] Sir Joseph Hooker, C.B., G.C.S.I., M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S., F.L.S.

[2] Professor Marshall Ward, F.R.S., Hon. D.Sc., F.L.S., Professor of Botany at Cambridge University.

[3] Dr Shipley, M.A., Hon. D.Sc., F.Z.S., F.L.S., Master of Christ's College, Cambridge.

[4] Sir William Schlich, K.C.I.E., F.R.S., Ph.D., F.L.S., etc.

[5] G. S. Hart, Inspector-General of Forests with the Government of India; C. G. Rogers, Chief Conservator of Forests, Burma; M. Hill, Chief Conservator of Forests, Central Provinces.

[6] On the closure of the College in 1904, the School of Forestry was removed to Oxford, where, thanks to the tact, tenacity of purpose, enthusiasm, and ready generosity of Sir William Schlich, the Father of Scientific Forestry in Great Britain, its continuance is practically assured.

be complete without a suggestion of the work and personality of the brilliant botanist—Professor Marshall Ward—whose most remarkable work was done during the decade he spent in Surrey.

Forced by circumstances to leave school while still a lad, he determined—nevertheless—to play his part in the world of intellect, and continued to educate himself, frequenting the evening classes organised by the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, where he had the good fortune to work under the most inspiring of teachers—Professor Huxley. The strain of the double life on his health was immense—he sometimes fainted in class—and it is to be feared that his premature death is to be traced to this early period of overwork.

In 1875 he went for a session to Owens College, Manchester, where he carried off the prize for every subject he studied. Next year he won an open scholarship at Christ's College, and took a first class in botany in the Natural Science Tripos in 1879. Henceforth his success was assured. Rising rapidly in his profession, he successively held Bishop Berkeley's Fellowship for Original Research, a Lectureship at Owens College on Vegetable Physiology and Histology, a Fellowship at Christ's College, Cambridge, the Professorship of Botany at Coopers Hill (1884); and finally —eleven years later (1895)—he filled the Chair of Botany at Cambridge, where—at the head of what is considered the best equipped institute in the world—he was evolving a School of Botanists from which great things were expected, when his health suddenly gave way, and he died (1906).

Such was the significant frame-work of a full life, devoted —in spite of material difficulties—to scientific research.

At the beginning of his career he was sent to Ceylon to study the minute local fungi that had attacked the leaves of the coffee-plant, ruined the coffee-planters of the island,

and contributed to the collapse of the Oriental Bank. The evil admitted of no remedy, but Professor Marshall Ward brought the origin and curious life-history of the malignant parasite into the domain of science.

His contributions to knowledge are manifold, and though his mind and work were essentially scientific and unutilitarian, his results were sometimes incidentally of great practical value, more especially in the realm of bacteriology. He proved that exposure to direct sunshine is fatal to bacteria in a fluid medium, the result of his laborious investigations being a modification of the policy regulating the water supply of London.[1] He also discovered that anthrax and typhoid bacilli—which can live in water—are destroyed by light, but more especially by the ultra-violet light-rays, and advised the use of the arc light for purposes of disinfection.

Those discoveries, however, are merely by-products of his work. It is as a scientist that his name will live. Enough has been said to suggest the influence which so luminous an intelligence, so restless a scientific curiosity, and so pertinacious a power of work could not fail to exert on young men entering on a profession of which trees and plants and fungi are the raw material.

It may be added that Professor Marshall Ward was a teacher of extraordinary brilliancy and charm, and a musician by grace of God, of whom it was said that, had he made Music and not Science his profession, he would have risen to equal eminence.

[1] "If we hear nothing now of obtaining water from Wales, it is because we know that even polluted flood-water, if exposed in large reservoirs, will rid itself of its bacterial contamination, partly, as was known already, by subsidence, but most effectually, as was shown by Marshall Ward, by the destruction of its most deleterious constituents by the direct action of sunlight." —"Harry Marshall Ward," by Sir William Thiselton Dyer, in *Makers of British Botany*, edited by F. W. Oliver, Cambridge University Press, 1913 p. 274.

Enough has been said of Sir Alex's efforts to establish the financial independence of the College, and thus to secure it from attacks from quarters accurately forecast in 1870 by Mr Gladstone. It was not work that was congenial to him; it was lightened, however, by the great pleasure he derived from helping young men to get the billet which was to be their start in life.

The formal management of the College gave him little or no trouble. He was accustomed to large undertakings, and therefore to delegating authority to competent subordinates. Having traced its general lines, he naturally left educational details in the hands of the distinguished experts who were his colleagues, and who represented, each in his especial branch, the last word of contemporary knowledge.

But, if he left the technical training of the engineers of the future to his Staff in the well-founded assurance that his confidence was not misplaced, he took a very serious view of his personal responsibility for the character of the officers he was about to send to India as representatives of Christian civilisation. His own personal life was based on religion. The impression made on him in boyhood by the religious atmosphere of Herr von Fellenberg's household was deepened in India by the holy life led by many of his most valued friends—Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir Herbert Edwardes, Sir Robert Montgomery, Colonel Rennell Taylor, and others, who were saints as well as heroes. He believed in the efficacy of prayer; and was convinced that nothing was more conducive to nobility of life than a determined obedience to divine laws and a reverent consciousness of divine assistance. It was his fervent hope that the hearts of many of the men whom he was equipping for public service in India might rest on the foundation which he himself had found so stable; and, though he never addressed them on the

subject, his views were well known, for his life spoke eloquently and in a language none could misunderstand.

"Sir Alex was an intensely religious man," wrote Professor Minchin in after years, "and regarded moral discipline and example as the highest interest of the College. His life was in accordance with his religion, which was a simple system altogether aloof from rites, ceremonies, and ritualistic observances. He belonged to a now almost extinct class of evangelical Protestants. His conscientiousness and strict honesty were the visible expressions of his religion. . . . He attached great importance to regularity in attendance at the College Chapel, and he did so from the best motives. In such a matter we are brought face to face with the effect of compulsion in religious observances. In my opinion the moral value of compulsion is negative, he could not see it in this light, his optimism led him to hope for good effects; and certainly the example set by himself was well calculated to induce good lives in others."

His standard of public life was high; how could it be otherwise, seeing that he had been educated by Herr von Fellenberg and had served with the old Panjab Staff, of the members of which it has been said that they "were not merely hard-working administrators and fine soldiers, but men entirely devoted to the people and their Service."

Looking on his students not only as engineers-in-the making, but as the future representatives of England in the East, he was anxious that they should go out to India already imbued with a liking for its natives, who are shrewd observers of character and attach more importance to breeding and disinterestedness than to learning. Sincerity, self-sacrifice, courtesy, and straightness—these are the things which the people of India understand, and these it is, and the confidence they inspire, which are the true foundation of British power. "Natives read our characters like a book,

and an easy book too," so wrote one who knew and loved the people he ruled;[1] it is important, therefore, that the pages of this book should be inscribed with things lovely and of good report, of which we know that it is well for all men that they should think.

The point of view from which Sir Alex viewed the future careers of his students was that of a Statesman rather than of a Civil Engineer; he looked beyond the handling of bricks and mortar and fire and steel to the man and the nation. His students, aware from the beginning—in the vague, inarticulate way of the young—of the character of their Chief's ideals and whither they tended, are fully aware of their significance now that they too are approaching the journey's end. Looking back on the tale of their own labours, they realise how great to them has been the value of certain words they heard in those old days, and of certain impalpable influences to which they were then subjected. One of them, who has played his part with distinction, writes of the "enormous importance and value of the work done by Sir Alex in the last phase of his active life, and the dominating influence of his character—working through varied personalities of the Professors—on the development of a particularly high and special character in the young men passing through the College." After speaking of the professional attainments of the Coopers Hill men, he adds: "I feel that the wishes and intentions of its founders in the matter of developing a Corps of Civil Engineers with a somewhat special standard of personal character, integrity, and honour, have been realised to a quite remarkable extent, and that this result is unquestionably due in large measure to Sir Alex's example and influence. In view of the life-work of the men leaving the College, I can scarcely conceive an achievement of greater service to the Empire."

[1] General Sir Richard Pollock, K.C.S.I.

Sir Alex was not anxious to turn out a number of ambitious and abnormally-gifted young men, burning to do brilliant work—men, looking for applause and kudos he held in absolute abhorrence—he looked rather for the sound worker who would do the dull day's work to the top of his ability, and such, he knew from experience, seldom fail to rise to the height of such opportunities as occur. The *Übermensch* had no place in his scheme; he did not legislate for him, but for what is most needed in great public Departments, viz.—able, normal men, who live and work—on sound lines based on principle and high ideals of public service—regardless of interested clamour and the popularity of early and showy results. Good, solid, reliable work—*esse quam videri*—this was his ideal.

Second only to religion and character did he place the healthy body and the means by which it is kept "fit." An exceptionally hard worker himself, a shoulderer of difficulties, and a lover of danger, he had always been a hard player also. "Sir Alex was ardent in his admiration for manly sports," writes one of his early students—Mr A. T. Mackenzie, now Chief Engineer to the Nizam of Hyderabad—"and a great encourager of such games as demand courage, decision, and self-denial. Rugby[1] football was his preference, and the whole family used to come to the football field on match-days, and get most excited." "I never saw him angry," adds the writer, "or in anything but a sunny temper. I cannot form an idea of what he would be like in anger, though one could see that he was capable of righteous indignation." The latter observation sheds a pleasant light on Mr Mackenzie's College-career, for Sir Alex could be very angry when occasion arose. "He was a strict disciplinarian," writes one of his colleagues, "but

[1] It will be remembered that at Chatham he had been called the Football King.

generally had a strong tendency to take a merciful view of a case; but, in the event of anything of grave importance taking place, Sir Alex was the very last man any student of Coopers Hill cared to meet."

He attached importance not only to games, as fields in which *esprit de corps*, self-reliance, and chivalry are naturally acquired, but to familiarity with the social amenities. He knew how hard and solitary would be the future lives of many of the joyous laughter-loving lads by whom he was surrounded, and how important then to each of them would be the power of taking his place quickly in a station—already, perhaps, in the social occupation of a Corps or two of red-coated military-men—in which he would have but a fortnight or so to spend; otherwise, the long-looked-for recreative race-week, or cricket week, with its dances and theatricals, might well prove no time of rejoicing, but a time of mortification rather, and send the holiday-maker back to the *mofussil* with the sad consciousness of failure. He showed the students considerable hospitality, therefore, and took pains to have them introduced to the gentry of the country-side, sure that the companionship of English ladies involved in tennis-parties, picnics, and dances is an important item in the education of the complete Englishman. This, indeed, most Coopers Hill men would get at home; some, however, were less fortunately placed, and for all of them was it good.

In this work, Sir Alex, like Sir George Chesney, was fortunate in finding his ablest and most sympathetic helper in his home. Lady Taylor's delight in the *joie de vivre* of young people was the measure of her sympathy when things went ill with them. Sorrow, sickness, and death find their way everywhere. It was those on whom shadows fell who knew the comfort of her ready helpfulness, and the passion of pity with which she accompanied them along

darkening ways. Nor did her tenderness go unrecognised or unrewarded.

Such was the attitude of Sir Alex and Lady Taylor towards the students. What was the students' attitude towards them?

It is admirably suggested in a letter written in after years by Mr Mackenzie. "Sir George Chesney," he writes, "was succeeded by Sir Alex Taylor in the Presidency of Coopers Hill. There was a very great contrast between the two men, the former initiated, the latter consolidated. Both were immensely distinguished, and in a sort of way we were aware of this and of the honour which they reflected on us. But youths are interested chiefly in what affects themselves. It meant but little to us that Sir Alex had been one of the principal actors in the siege of Delhi, and that his adventures and experiences would have made a book. We knew that all this was very fine, but we took things at first hand, and the important thing to us was how he affected us as President. . . . Such is the egotism of youth. Not that we could have got much information from him had we tried. There never was a man more reluctant to talk of himself; and it was only from chance words uttered in unguarded moments that one could guess that he had ever seen war, or wounds, or death; and even then he sketched his own share in the experiences alluded to in a jocular fashion.

It is quite impossible to separate Sir Alex from Lady Taylor. Any picture of the one evokes an image of the other. They were kindness itself to the students; and, among the rest, I was privileged to see something of their family life. They were both absolutely unaffected and unofficial; and we accepted their kindness and hospitality in happy ignorance that it was uncommon in its essence. Looking back, one can see how very uncommon it was. It ought to have been extremely heavy work to entertain us raw youths, and

would have been so to most people in similar positions; but they never showed a sign of it, and I doubt if they felt it; the result, this, of the overflowing kindness of their hearts, which were large enough, and loving enough, to include the dull, the awkward, and the uncouth; perhaps, even to prefer them. Of Lady Taylor, we always said that her eyes shone when she heard that any one of us was ill, because she could then go and look after him.

Looking back to those happy days, and trying to formulate my impressions, there rises before me the picture of a man with a keen, eager face, a delightful smile, and shrewd but very kind eyes. He seemed always cheerful and happy, and had an infectious low laugh. I remember looking at him, and thinking of him with all a young man's hero-worship, because Sir Richard Temple—whom I had met somewhere—had told me that he was 'as brave as a Paladin.' But, strangely enough, I see now that there was a distinct element of protectiveness in my feeling towards him, instinctive, no doubt, the outcome of an unconscious perception of the guilelessness and simplicity of his nature. A more simple-hearted man never lived. He seemed unable to imagine a deliberate deception, or a sordid or even mixed motive. This, of course, was speedily apparent to such shrewd observers as youths, and it put us on our honour. There was never any attempt to deceive him or to palter with the truth. Beside our knowledge that he would believe us, there was, I expect, a consciousness that in the greatness and charity of his heart he would forgive and allow for a confessed fault, even if it had to be punished. . . . He was an intensely religious man, and made religion the standard of his life."

Youth is more than shrewdly observant—as Mr Mackenzie describes it—it has an almost uncanny perception of the realities of personality, deeply hidden under

appearances though they be, and it is characteristic of its clairvoyance that a student to whom Sir Alex was known only as "the President," or the "Duke," and who was in complete ignorance of his Chief's history, was nevertheless so acutely aware of something in the virile and autocratic man before him which was sensitive and might need protection, as to be driven to dwell on it thirty years later, when he was endeavouring to formulate his recollections. This—of which Mr Mackenzie was instinctively aware—was what made Sir Alex Taylor helpless in the face of the one personal injustice of any moment which ever fell to his lot.

Of his private life throughout these long years at Coopers Hill, there is little to be said. He gathered his children about him, keeping his two girls at his side and their mother's, for a time at least, while his two boys went backwards and forwards to Sandhurst, until the sad day dawned on which they too—taking the way of the sons of Anglo-Indians—embarked for the East; the eldest, Alex, having joined the "Queen's," then stationed in India, while the youngest, Neville, to whom horses were a delight, entered the XIVth Bengal Lancers—"Murray's Jat Horse"—a regiment raised in the far-away days by a dear friend, "Jock" Murray.

As at Chatham, so at Coopers Hill, sailing and boat-building were his chief amusements. He designed a river sailing-boat, the *Lily*, of which he was extremely vain, which carried a centre-board and a quite inordinate spread of white canvas. He sailed it himself with the help of his own boys at first, and then with that of recruits from the College, and won a considerable number of racing cups. It was a charming sight to watch the boat cutting rapid zigzags across and across the long blue reach at Anchorwyke, heeling over until its white wings almost lay upon the river-water,

while its steersman sat at its stern, his face grave and tense, his whole being as solemnly concentrated on the job-in-hand as if it were the pivot of the movement of nations.

Sometimes when he "ran the thing too fine" and the unexpected occurred—which will happen occasionally—the water would rush into the heeling boat, the mast and white sails would become slowly vertical, and with a gurgling sound the vessel would go to the bottom of the Thames, to be raised, with great labour and much danger to the fragile craft, some few days subsequently. An incident this which became more frequent as Sir Alex grew older, and one which he took much to heart, for it reflected on his professional judgment, his intention having been to run close to the wind, but not to sink his boat. Neither was it to Lady Taylor's liking. It is not pleasant to see a husband who is nearing the completion of his three-score years and ten and is troubled with rheumatic gout, sitting unperturbed in a sinking boat, or swimming for dear life in ice-cold water. It was this spark of danger, however, which made sailing on the Thames possible to an old man who in his day had swum the Indus at Attock, and had tumbled down the torrential Pūnch in a coracle.

Their President's sporting sailing endeared him to the Coopers Hill men; though it has been said by one behind the scenes "that students sometimes turned his enthusiasm for boating to their own advantage—maliciously introducing the subject of sailing when sent to 'the Duke's' study for a 'carpeting,' in the hope that by propounding some new 'gym' they might escape the full penalty of their misdeeds." Indeed, Sir Alex's vitality and boyish spirits, which were maintained until the end of his Presidency, were amazing, especially when taken in connection with the strain and hardship of the greater part of his life in India. "When he was not far short of seventy years

of age he was seen to climb up to a third-floor window of what was known as the 'new block' at Coopers Hill, with the object of personally determining whether it were possible to obtain ingress to the College by a route other than that of the Porter's Lodge"—this is a note by a sympathetic observer.

A man of this type, so simple, so virile, and so generous, could not fail to win the hearts of the young men whom he had taken under his wing, and to attune their lives to the better things.

Time passed, bringing honours which had their roots in distant days. Time passed: old friends—returning to England like homing birds—gathered about him, giving substance to memories which lay behind the green peace of Surrey like martial music and the tramp of armed men heard from a still backwater.

In 1889 he was created a Knight of the Grand Cross of the Bath, and had the privilege of investment by the Queen's own hands. Lady Taylor and her daughters were frequently associated with him in the honour of invitations to parties at Windsor Castle, at which her Majesty addressed herself to him with her habitual graciousness, and at which he was given more than one opportunity of conversing with the Duke of Connaught, of whose military ability he formed a distinguished estimate.

In 1881, he was asked by his late Chief, Lord Napier, then Constable of the Tower, to stand as godfather to his youngest son, Albert Edward Alexander, in which position he had the honour of association with two august sponsors—King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, then Prince and Princess of Wales.

Nine years later (1890) it was his sad privilege to serve as one of the pall-bearers at the funeral in St Paul's of the

same great and dear Chief; he and his companions in this last service having been selected by Lord Napier himself out of the number of the men who had been associated with him in both public service and private friendship. Seldom has a public funeral enshrined a heavier heart of personal sorrow; for Robert Napier was a man who commanded, not admiration and reverence only, but love; so human was he, so able and so helpful, so disinterested and so chivalrous; the Bayard of his Corps—*sans peur et sans reproche.*

Hardly two weeks previously Lord Napier and he, walking together, had accompanied the body of their dear comrade and friend, Sir Henry Yule,[1] to its last resting-place. Soldier, statesman, scholar, cosmopolitan, and man of letters, Sir Henry was distinguished among his peers by personal charm, born, not only of a stately presence and great intellectual gifts—though these were his—but of the generous joy with which he greeted *quality* in whatsoever phase of life it revealed itself to him. Remarkable also was his power of appreciating the really significant and valuable in the literary records of the adventurous traveller both of to-day and of mediæval times, a power which made him a great geographer of bygone days and of countries he had never seen. It is with absolute propriety that his biographer, General Robert Maclagan, R.E., applies to him an appreciation dedicated by Bernier to a fellow-geographer whom he called :—"cet illustre curieux qui nous donne tous les jours plus de découvertes, sans sortir de son cabinet, que nous n'en avions appris de ceux qui ont fait le tour du monde." It was to these endowments, both aspects of one gift—sympathy—that the translator

[1] Colonel Sir Henry Yule, K.C.S.I., C.B., LL.D., R.E., sometime President of the Geographical Society and Member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India.

and editor of Marco Polo's travels owed both his position in the world of savants, and the phalanx of distinguished personal friends who looked for him in every capital of Europe.

Remarkable also was Sir Henry's literary equipment. How sensitive was his appreciation of the value of words, and how scholarly his manner of handling them is evident in the noble and pathetic lines penned on his death-bed in acknowledgment of his election as Corresponding Member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, a much-appreciated honour announced to the dying man by telegram, for his French Colleagues' Latin sensibility made them eager that this ray of light should reach their friend before the mists of death swept between him and them for ever. "Reddo gratias, illustrissimi domini," he wrote; "ob honores tanto nimios quanto immeritos. Mihi robora deficiunt, vita collabitur, accipiatis voluntatem pro facto. Cum corde pleno et gratissimo, moriturus, vos, illustrissimi domini, saluto."

In the spring of 1895 Sir Alex was shocked by the sudden and most unexpected death, through heart failure, of his younger comrade and predecessor in the Presidency of Coopers Hill, Sir George Chesney, who had left the Service three years previously, and was then representing Oxford in the House of Commons. He had just returned from a fatiguing *tournée* among his constituents, during which he had addressed several large meetings, when the cold hand of Death touched his shoulder, and the able and valiant worker—from whose parliamentary-career results of the first importance were expected—was gone. After he had left Coopers Hill and had held office for six years as Secretary to the Government of India in the Military Department, he was placed at the head of that Department, Lord Roberts then being Commander-in-Chief in India.

The collaboration of those two brilliant intelligences resulted in an epoch-making phase of the military administration of India—the Native States and Chiefs were united in a scheme of Imperial defence, and their soldiery moulded into the magnificent Corps they now form; the equipment, organisation, etc., of the Army was worked up into a previously unheard-of state of efficiency; and Indian defences, together with co-ordinate railway communication along important strategical lines, were completed. On leaving India, Sir George had determined to make the knowledge he had garnered from so wide a field effective in England, and with this end in view he secured his Seat in the House and inaugurated a campaign for the purpose of expediting certain reforms in the methods of the English War Office by a series of articles in the *Nineteenth Century*. Golden results were anticipated from his tenacity and ability. Suddenly, however, the realisation of these patriotic schemes was vetoed by Death. He was buried near his mother in the graveyard of the parish church of the district in which Coopers Hill stands. His tombstone was the last tribute paid by many friends to a great and brilliant organiser, a loyal Chief, a valued President, a charming writer, and a delightful companion.

And thus, old friend after old friend slipped away.

Time passed, and Sir Alex came at last to feel that the long afternoon of his life was passing into evening, and that night and rest were not far distant.

In 1896, he relinquished the Presidency of the College. In the parting words addressed to the Coopers Hill men on his last Speech Day—Lord George Hamilton then being Secretary of State for India—he dwelt on the ideal which he had successfully striven to make that of all the men who passed through his hands. After alluding to certain warm

appreciations of the character and loyalty of Coopers Hill men communicated to him by members of his own Corps in India, he drew the attention of those present to the fact that the quality especially underlined in these commendations was "the honourable devotion of our men to their duty, even under circumstances calculated to damp and depress. Here we have *grit*," he said, "the quality that goes to make a service distinguished. This personal quality is beyond the reach of lectures, laboratories and examinations, but not beyond the reach of *esprit de corps*, . . . an animating spirit able to develop and strengthen the latent qualities of men." "I desire strongly," he added, "to have it fostered at Coopers Hill in every possible way."

He then told them that in reading Younghusband's *The Heart of a Continent*, he had come on a passage in which the author attributes the predominance of Europeans over Asiatics, not to superior intelligence, but to greater toughness of character and to the practice of an instinctive altruism which has its roots in the principles underlying Christianity. "Europeans," writes Captain Younghusband, "are anything but perfect in the practice of these principles, but when we hear of a wounded British officer dismounting from his pony, and insisting upon his wounded comrade mounting in his stead and riding back in safety while he walked, though the enemy were firing from all sides, then we know that such principles are sometimes applied ; and it is because they are more frequently and thoroughly applied by the Christian than by the non-Christian races, that the former have been able to establish their superiority." "At this stage of my reading," said Sir Alex, "I looked to the note at the bottom of the page . . . and saw with a glow of pride that the wounded British officer who acted so nobly was Lieutenant Fowler, a Coopers Hill man, who had been given a com-

mission in the Royal Engineers direct from Coopers Hill on the completion of his course. When I say 'splendidly done, Fowler,' I am sure that not only every Coopers Hill man, but every Englishman, is heartily with me. And what is it we so thoroughly admire? Is it not that, Fowler's early Christian training having shown him his duty, he had grit enough not to be deterred from doing it by any consideration of personal safety?"

And once again, in his last "last words" he summarises his ideal: "The great incentive will always remain the same —your sense of duty and honour, and your loyalty to your Government."

On bidding him farewell the members of his Staff presented him with a volume containing water-colour sketches of the College and its neighbourhood, prefaced by a beautifully-illuminated dedication, in which, after alluding with gratitude to a "life assiduously devoted to the welfare of the College," its writers add: "Those to whom the welfare of an Institution so closely connected with India are dear cannot refrain from expressing thankfulness to Sir Alex Taylor on wider grounds than these: for the pages of English history remind them that, but for the heroic and devoted services of Englishmen in India nearly forty years ago, there might be no Indian interests for them to cherish; and that prominent in this record stands the name of Sir Alex Taylor."

"When he left," wrote one of the Staff, "we felt that we had lost, not a President only, but a companion and a friend." "His was a great and inspiring influence for good, the memory of which must always abide with those who knew him," wrote one of the young men whom he had trained.

And thus, serenely, the sun set on Alex Taylor's working day.

CHAPTER XXV

LAST DAYS

On leaving Coopers Hill in 1896 Sir Alex and Lady Taylor travelled on the Continent for upwards of a year, pending the completion of a house which they were building on Englefield Green. It stood close to the home of their youngest daughter, Mildred—whose husband, a Fellow of Coopers Hill, was then on the College Staff[1]—not far from the College itself, in which the ex-President's interest had become grandfatherly, and within reach of the river, on which he still hoped to sail his *Lily*.

Sir Alex's successor was a brother-officer of distinction, Colonel Pennycuick[2]—the hero of one of the most impressive engineering feats of this or any other age—who had forced a mighty river of Southern India to change its course, and, instead of flowing Westward into the Arabian Sea, to run Eastward into the Bay of Bengal, from which it was separated by the mountain-backbone of the Southern peninsula.

The following briefly are the main lines of an undertaking the varying fortunes of which Sir Alex had followed for years, both on account of its professional interest and because the members of Colonel Pennycuick's Staff were

[1] Richard John Woods, F.C.H.

[2] President of Coopers Hill, 1896–1899. Son of Brigadier-General Pennycuick, who was killed at the battle of Chilianwala.

chiefly Coopers Hill men,[1] of whose work in this connection their College was proud.

The Southern Ghats—the lofty watershed of Southern India—are the birthplace of the two rivers which are the protagonists in the drama to be recounted. One of these —the Periyar—rises on the Western slopes of this mountain-range, and—formerly—overfed by the copious rainfall dashed by the South-Western monsoons against the Western face of the ridge, took a short but often devastating course to the Western sea; while the other—the Vaigai—rising on the opposite side of the range, and poorly fed by the scanty discharge of the monsoon-clouds after they had breasted the mountains, rolled its meagre waters Eastward, often dwindling in summer to a mere trickle before it had crossed the vast and arid plain separating it from its goal, the Eastern sea.

How to reinforce the insufficiency of the Vaigai with the superfluity of the Periyar—this was the problem put before Colonel Pennycuick and his Staff, and solved by them in the following manner.

They caught and tamed the wild head-waters of the Periyar—a turbulent river, the highest flood-discharge of which is equal to half the average flow of Niagara—converting them into a lake some 8000 acres in extent, by means of a gigantic dam, 178 feet in height, 140 feet in thickness at the bottom, and 1200 feet long at the top, built across the mouth of a high mountain-valley through which the river flowed. They further ran a tunnel, 6650 feet in length, through the mountain-ridge separating the watershed of this torrential river from that of the Vaigai, and through this they led the waters penned up in the Western Valley until they faced, not the sinking, but the rising sun.

[1] Mr H. S. Taylor, Mr B. de Winton, Mr S. D. Pears, Mr A. T. Mackenzie, Mr P. R. Allen, Mr H. T. Keeling.

The Engineers then suffered the flood to fling itself down a steep declivity into the channel of the Vaigai, along which it was then compelled to run Eastward—under careful tutelage—across the almost rainless continent, until at last it reached the warm salt straits which separate India from Ceylon; it arrived much reduced in volume, however, for it had been forced to bestow the bulk of its substance *en route* on local agriculturists.

Such a task would have been difficult of execution under the most favourable conditions; it was triumphantly accomplished in the teeth of difficulties which men of less indomitable spirit would have felt to be insuperable. The material used—bulky and expensive machinery, plant, etc.—had to be dragged a distance of over a hundred miles from the nearest railway-station, across four large unbridged rivers, and up mountains several hundred feet in height, by a track with a ruling gradient of one in fifteen, to a clearing in a tropical virgin mountain-forest[1] of which the natural denizens were tigers, wild elephants—who amused themselves by tearing down the engineers' tents, houses, and works—and the blue-eyed bison, before whom the native workers would throw down their tools and flee. Nor were these savage creatures the only enemies to be encountered; the wild country-side had a still more deadly denizen,—malaria—which made it uninhabitable from March to June, and perilous at all times.

Face to face with innumerable technical difficulties; served by some 5000 coolies, not the ablest or most energetic of mankind; stricken with ague, fever, dysentery and rheumatism; ill-fed, ill-housed, and isolated; Colonel

[1] "The jungle was of the thickest and most impenetrable nature, the undergrowth being composed of ceta and the rattan creeper, through which lanes had to be cut with axe and chopper in order to take cross-sections of the valley."—*Hist. of the Periyar Project*, by A. T. Mackenzie, M.I.C.E.

Pennycuick and his gallant Staff stuck stoutly to their task. After eight years of ceaseless toil, anxiety, discomfort, and danger, the day dawned—10th October 1895—on which the cutting of a strand composed of the red and blue ribbon of the Royal Engineers and the blue and gold ribbon of Coopers Hill, resulted in the appearance of the head-waters of the Periyar on the Eastern slope of the Southern Ghats, amid the cheers of a distinguished company of European visitors—among them Lord Wenlock, Governor of Madras—and the outcry of thousands of natives, who flung garlands of flowers into the advancing stream—propitiatory offerings; but alas, the local deities had already claimed the living sacrifices which civilisation would have denied them—tens upon tens of human lives. Foremost among these was that of Henry Scott Taylor, a young Coopers Hill man of great promise, the executive head of the Works from their commencement in 1887 until his death by a machinery accident in 1891.

It was with immense interest also that Sir Alex learned the characteristic history of the Harnai Railway (1882–87), constructed by his dear old friend Buster Browne, from the lips of his son-in-law, who had been one of Sir James's most trusted adjutants in the execution of this arduous task.

The reader will remember that an offshoot of the great railway-system connecting Peshawar and Lahore with Karachi runs—from a point on the Indus half way between Multan and Karachi—past Shikarpur to Sibi on the borders of British Baluchistan. For strategic reasons connected with menacing Russian movements in Central Asia it was found necessary to make Quetta[1]—the capital

[1] Quetta lies on an open plain, 5500 feet above sea-level, overlooked by mountains twice that height; to the North-West lies an open view across the base of the Pishin valley to the Khojak pass and Kandahar, the approach from the latter being barred by British fortifications; to the South lies the open valley leading to the Bolan pass.

of British Baluchistan, and the Southernmost point of the Frontier defences of North-Western India — rapidly accessible to troops, or, in other words, to connect it with the long reaches of the North-Western Railway.

The difficulties attendant on such an undertaking were very great, for the country between Sibi and Quetta is traversed by high ranges of deforested mountains—wedges of naked rock—through which torrential rivers have cut narrow gorges at the bottom of which they trickle in dry weather, but through which they rush after rain and during the season of melting snows—great irresistible columns of water.

This country of savage aspect is fitly mated with a climate characterised by great extremes of temperature: the thermometer sometimes registering 118° F. indoors at Sibi, where the line starts, and sometimes 18° F. below zero—under cover—on its highest mountain-reaches only some hundred miles distant. Nor do its few predatory inhabitants—fierce sons of Ishmael—fall out of the picture.

The speedy connection of Quetta with existing railway-lines being imperative for political reasons, it was decided to approach it by two lines both starting from Sibi. One of these rose rapidly to Quetta through the North-Westerly Bolan pass, and was a narrow-gauge railway with steep gradients intended for light transport only. In spite of the colossal difficulties to be encountered, it was hoped that this line might be laid down quickly. The other was a broad-gauge railway, with less steep gradients—1 in 45—intended for heavy transport. It approached Quetta from the Pishin plateau on the North-East, a height reached after hard climbing, by a necessarily wide circuit, through wild and almost inaccessible mountain-rifts. The difficulties with which this route bristled were so immense that it was expected that it would be long in construction.

Its execution was entrusted to Sir James Browne, to

whom was given the rank of Brigadier-General, and a Brigade strong in Sappers and Pioneers, destined to protect his work from outrage and to aid in its construction. The Engineering problems with which he was confronted resulted from the precipitous character of the mountains through which the line had to pass, and the difficulty of finding an alignment in almost inaccessible country for a railway with a moderate gradient which nevertheless must rise from 500 feet—at Sibi—to 6800 in less than a hundred miles.

Other difficulties arose from heavy sudden rains and floods, and from the treacherous and variable character of the ground. To embarrassments due to natural obstacles were added such duties as, (1) the formation of a staff of picked men of exceptional driving-power and resource, real assistants in the execution of a task in which nothing was certain of occurrence except the unexpected; (2) the collection and organisation of groups of labourers, who worked in gangs each of which were some 30,000 strong—men brought from a distance who needed food and shelter; and (3) the collection and organisation of plant and material, associated with which were problems hard of solution concerning the mode of their transference to the inhospitable sites where they would be needed.

The first reaches of this railway run through a desolate gorge cut by the Nari and its confluents between the naked cliffs and fantastic pinnacles of beetling mountains, through the midst of which the torrent swings in so tortuous a course as to necessitate the erection of six large bridges in as many miles.

This river—a contemptible stream when its waters are low—sweeps all before it when in flood, as the Engineers learned to their cost, for again and again it rose before they were ready to meet its attacks, carrying away works, embankments, materials—everything it could reach.

On one occasion Sir James Browne heard, to his dismay, that it had washed a great pumping-machine—just out from England—into an excavation, big and deep, which it was sucking dry, preparatory to the laying of foundations. Nothing daunted, and quite unmindful of his dignity as Brigadier-General, James Browne repaired immediately to the scene of the disaster, and soon the narrow valley teaming with coolies took on the aspect of a fair—the air rang with the sound of native bands, the throbbing of tomtoms, and the rhythmic stamping of bare feet—and many days had not elapsed before the pumping-engine rose on the wave of goodwill and energy evoked by the Chief Engineer. The scene recalled the old Bara-days to Sir Alexander.[1] When the Nari next rushed the Works it was powerless for evil.

The most serious difficulties on the line, however, were presented in another section by the celebrated Chappar Rift, a chasm a mile above the level of the sea, two and a half miles long, many hundred feet high, and a few yards wide at its base, along which a boiling torrent, thirty or forty feet in depth, ran in flood-time.

The uncertain character of the rock, and the consequent frequency of landslips, forbade the running of a line upon a ledge cut along the top of this rift, and made it necessary to pierce it with a number of short tunnels with open approaches. The initial step in this operation needed nerve. Workmen were suspended on ropes from the tops of the cliffs overhanging the site of these future tunnels, sometimes a height of several hundred feet; the first man down gained a footing by driving a crowbar into the perpendicular cliff against which he dangled; others followed, and presently it became possible to erect a platform from which blasting operations might be initiated. The configuration of the ground made it necessary that the line should run

[1] See *ante*, vol. i. p. 111–2.

first on one side of the chasm and then on the other; the construction of the consequent bridge[1] was exceedingly difficult, hung mid-air as it was, three hundred feet above the stream-bed, with awkward and confined approaches and—on account of its height—necessarily built without staging.

Quite another type of embarrassment met the workers on a still higher reach, Mud Gorge—where a tunnel and cuttings had to be run through treacherous ground on the steep side-slope of a high hill. Water—percolating from a distant lake to the gorge below—rendered the terrain most unstable; a mud-like ooze, forcing itself upward, resulted in disastrous slips and in the collapse and filling-up of excavations. This dilemma was met by the use of large bodies of men working continuously, night and day, and by the completion of masonry-linings in short lengths.

The instability of the ground through which the engineers had to bore and mine was the source of some of their worst dilemmas. The highest tunnel on the line—Kuchali—fell in so often while under construction, that at last no workman could be persuaded to enter it unless tempted by a five-fold wage, and urged by the example of his white superiors.

Not least among the hardships to which these precursors of the Army were exposed was sickness—fever, ague, scurvy, and cholera.

The mortality among the coolies was great. "The whole line of the Work," wrote Sir James, "is dotted with stones to mark the graves of the unfortunate wretches whom the high wages offered attracted from their homes in India and Afghanistan. In one gang of two hundred workmen, the deaths from fever were recorded for a long

[1] The Louise-Margaret Bridge, called after the Duchess of Connaught, who opened it in March 1887.

time at the average rate of ten per day." Under these circumstances it is not surprising that desertions were frequent. On one occasion it was the Afghans who left in a body ; and, on another, the whole native clerical staff. The latter announced their intention to Sir James in a disconcerting but characteristic telegram :—"Clerks in council cholera raging to-night all go what can man give in exchange for soul." A very few months after the initiation of the work 60 per cent. of the Sappers employed were in hospital ; in June 1885, fourteen out of the twenty-four officers in charge of the Works were incapacitated by fever, three important experts in charge of special apparatus died, and also a number of Europeans in important but minor posts. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that none of the makers of the Harnai Railway failed to pay a heavy toll to the *genius loci* whose domains had been invaded, in the ill-health which was the subsequent fruit of over-exposure and over-fatigue in a pernicious climate.

In spite of all impediments, Sir James carried his work to a triumphant conclusion ; to die in harness, however, less than a decade later—his iron constitution broken down by relentless life-long over-exertion, as Sir Alex sadly commented. But how splendid the achievement! And how fine the means at his disposal, as his late Chief observed, contrasting Sir James's iron bridges with the timber-structures of the early days of the Panjáb, and his consummate machinery with the makeshifts with which the pioneer had been forced to content himself at a time when the use of steam as a motive force was still in its infancy in Europe.

And thus Alex Taylor's waning days were cheered by tales of the fine exploits of the generation following on his own, and his imagination warmed by possibilities which

loomed large on the horizon of his children's children—a mastery of realms-material through means undreamed of in his day.

But, while the sap of life sang in the veins of the world, his own vitality sank ; and it was not without pain that he brought his desires down to the level of his failing powers.

The river was his great stand-by. His boat kept him busy and in the open air. This pleasure, however, was finally ruled out of court by his doctor, who feared the effect of sudden "ducklings" on a man well past his three-score years and ten, and forbade the handling of a heavy centre-board and sails. He had lived in the saddle in his day ; never had he ridden for riding's sake, however, but in order to arrive as quickly as possible at the scene of some delightful action ; still less had he walked with no end in view except to exercise his legs. Life had taught him to look on both riding and walking as means of locomotion merely, and he was as little tempted to take an objectless walk or ride as to make an objectless railway-journey. With his boat, therefore, went the last of his outdoor pleasures.

He was not a man of many indoor tastes ; the character of his working life—begun young, and filled with difficult undertakings which had taxed his powers to the utmost—negatived this. From the beginning of his career to its end the "job in hand" had been big enough to fill his time and thoughts, and his recreations had been of the same nature : strenuous, generally combative, and—when really enjoyable—spiced with physical danger. What was less than this did not interest him. In short, his vigorous past made the process of self-adjustment to waning powers exceedingly difficult.

His eyes fortunately never failed him—he read his newspaper to the end without glasses—but he became very deaf : a serious trial, for this infirmity shut him out of general

conversation. When once the fact was established, however, and he knew that he could not hear, he took the misfortune in his usual sporting spirit. The present writer remembers a characteristic occasion. Dinner was in progress, and much laugh and talk was running round and across the table at the head of which he—who once had led the merriment—sat silent and wistful, ignorant of the joke. Then someone sitting near seized his hand, and tried to make him conversant with what was going on—in vain. *Seeing*, however, that his interpreter was raising her voice, and, being determined not to introduce a minor note into a gay scene, he fashioned his hands into a mimic trumpet, and began shouting and gesticulating in burlesque imitation of a sailor whose voice is drowned by high winds at sea.

He read a good deal in a desultory way, and lived largely in the lives of his children and grandchildren, whose doings he followed with interest. His eldest son commanded the Queen's, and he was always most accessible to compliments of which that regiment was the subject. His eldest daughter lived in Rome, having made an especial study of the pictures of the Italian Renaissance; he never took her work very seriously, and overwhelmed her with chaff on the score of her industry and Art—with a big A—the latter apparently not a subject held in high esteem by the makers of the Panjab! The light of his eyes was his youngest son. His sudden death, coming like a bolt from the blue, was a disabling blow.

Light-hearted, sweet-natured, gallant, Neville had never given his parents a moment's anxiety from the day on which he first saw the light at Pindi, shortly after the close of the Ambeyla campaign, until a few weeks of sickening suspense were ended in January 1905 by a heart-breaking telegram.

He joined the 14th Bengal Lancers—now known as "Murray's Jat Lancers"—in 1886, and from that date onward

his life in India—the poor man's paradise—had been of the happiest: a sportsman to his finger-tips, he had kept his "bobbery pack" and his polo ponies while he was young enough to delight in them, and, in spite of his inches—they amounted to six feet—had on occasion succeeded in reducing his weight sufficiently to ride winning horses trained by himself. Pig-sticking and polo, however, were the sports of his predilection. In 1892 he played in the regimental polo team[1] which won the Bengal Cavalry Cup; and many were the joyous and adventurous days spent by him and his brother-officers: Lumley Peyton, Andy Bairnsfather, and "Sammy" Weller—all of whom afterwards commanded the regiment—Major Hughes, Major Souter, and others —in hot pursuit of the wild boar across wild plains deeply scored by narrow stream-beds hidden in high sun-bleached grass.

His experiences were not purely regimental. He acted as aide-de-camp to Sir George White while that gallant and much-loved officer was Commander-in-Chief in India, and served as Adjutant with Lumsden's Horse throughout the Boer War, was mentioned in despatches, and received the Queen's Medal with two clasps and a brevet of Major.

After his return to India he had several bad falls while out pig-sticking; became very ill—how ill his people in England never knew until too late—was devotedly nursed by a dear comrade, Captain Dr Jay-Gould, who towards the end hardly left his bedside night or day, and by the wife of his Colonel—Colonel Lumley Peyton—in whose house he died in January 1905, aged 40.

The *Pioneer*, in its obituary notice of his career, after dwelling on his services in South Africa, says: "Of magnificent physique, Major Taylor was as famous as a sportsman

[1] Captain Wingate, Captain Hobbs, Captain Weller, and Captain Neville Taylor.

as a soldier. He was a splendid rider and a first-rate shot —one of whom one might truly say to all the world, 'This was a man.' He was an authority on polo, hunting, and shooting, in all of which sports he excelled, and was the author of the chapter on 'Hunting' in Aflalo's *Sportsman's Book for India*; also of a delightful book on ibex-shooting in the Himalayas." In a subsequent notice the following words are added to this appreciation: "Major Taylor was a sportsman to the backbone, a cheery and staunch friend, and a brilliant cavalry officer. As a pig-sticker, he had few equals in India. He was a very fine polo-player, and one of the best cavalry soldiers in the Service. . . . The Services deplore the loss of as fine a soldier as they had in their ranks."

These tributes are deserved; but Neville Taylor was more than this: how much more is known—possibly—only to his own people, and to the brother-officers with whom he lived for more than twenty years.

An exceptionally fine soldier and sportsman; a gay companion—with occasional lapses into an engaging melancholy demanding the balm of friendship; a brilliant raconteur, and an enthusiastic listener; ardent—all fire and flame for the success of the thing in hand—as sincere and guileless as he was impetuous; a loving son, a delectable brother, and an unselfish, whole-hearted friend—he was the joy and pride both of his men and of his comrades.

Very affecting were the attentions paid him by the former during his terrible illness. On his last Christmas Day, for instance, his big well-bred Jats brought him a great bunch of home-flowers, "the violets of his native land," got at considerable difficulty from a distance—their own thought. The outburst of grief which followed his untimely death was so intense and so sincere that one cannot but hope that he—who was relinquishing so much,

and so loved to be loved—was aware of it. His funeral is said to have been inexpressibly touching. The band of the 60th Rifles filled the air with the alternating sorrow and heavenly gladness of Chopin's Funeral March as his coffin—covered by the Union Jack, surrounded by his brother-officers, and followed by the native officers of his Corps and by all the officers in the station—was drawn on a gun-carriage to the cemetery along a road lined on both sides by the men of his regiment, his own squadron being stationed close to his last resting-place. The service followed; the volleys; the hymn-tune—"When our heads are bowed with woe"—played by the band alone, for none could join; and then the "Last Post" was sounded. All was over.

And thus honoured and loved, "one of the straightest men and truest gentlemen"—as more than one of his friends called him in their home-letters—ran his course, and was laid in a grave above which some of his brother-officers had begged should be written, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

During the previous year Sir Alex had the pain of seeing Coopers Hill College dissolved, and a limit placed on the existence of the great civil counterpart of his own Corps, in the interests of which he had laboured so hopefully and with his eye on such long perspectives. His regret was deep. His pride in the work accomplished was great, however—work rounded by this arbitrary dissolution into a compact and intelligible whole. He was satisfied with his men; they had acquitted themselves manfully, their professional reputation stood high, and their personal honour and disinterested service had created a tradition to which their successors will assuredly conform.

"Coopers Hill has not vanished," said Dr Unwin

at a public dinner some years later. "It remains in the fraternity of those educated there; its monuments are the great Public Works carried out by Coopers Hill men in India and other countries. The service it has done to the nation is very great, and the results of its work, such as will long endure"—words to which Sir Alex would have given his hearty assent.

Its suppression was preluded and followed by an outburst of indignant protest. Lord Curzon, writing from Simla, towards the end of 1903, informed Mr Brodrick—afterwards Lord Midleton—that the members of the Government of India desired to record their unanimous protest against the closing of the College, and stated that the heads of the various Governmental Departments were strongly in favour of its continuance. But the enemies of whom Mr Gladstone had spoken some thirty-five years previously—the Civil Engineers, the Schools, and the Colleges—had gathered strength since then; they carried the day.

"And thus," writes the *Times*, "passed away an Institution which had made history, and which had gained prestige for British Engineers through the world. Its subversion has never been explained, and has never been justified. All that can be said is that it was this country and not India that overthrew it, and that it has established honourable records wherever British Engineers have carried out great works."

The irreparable loss of the son whom he had loved to picture among familiar scenes, and the destruction of a Corps to which he had looked for splendid Indian public service through future ages, severed Sir Alex's connection with the country in which he had spent the better part of his life, but from which all his friends—all his younger contemporaries, even—had already withdrawn: a country which had grown to be a land of ghosts and memories.

And thus gradually his hold on life became loose, and slight the grip of its joys and sorrows.

He was not unhappy, however. The mere spectacle of external life—the trees and flowers, the changing seasons, the waves and sands of the sea, and the white sails of the river-boats—all were a source of quiet pleasure to him who so soon would see them no more; as also were the younger lives in the midst of which his own was embedded.

Old friends too gathered about him, bringing warmth with them—memories of happy bygone days and a sense of loyal support. Very welcome among them were General Crofton and General Pollard, old Addiscombe comrades; General Warrand, also, with his empty sleeve pinned on to his chest. Sir Dighton Probyn would drive over from Windsor and Sir Charles Brownlow from Warfield, and the three old soldiers would recall the belated ride from Kuria to the Ambeyla camp which nearly cost them their lives, and other frontier adventures. Lord Roberts would come from Ascot, and Sir John Watson from further afield, both with memories of Delhi, Lucknow, and a subsequent half-century to discuss; Mr James Macnabb, too, from Bracknell, and his brother Sir Donald—"dear little Donald," Sir Alex invariably added, *sotto voce*, to his name—both of them dear friends whom he had first known as little more than lads, and finally as *burra sahibs*—Commissioners, respectively, of Delhi and Peshawar. Sir Frederick Maunsell, also, of his own Corps, settled at Laleham, who, in spite of his eighty summers, would bicycle over to see him, and—rarely—George Ricketts, the civilian who had held up four regiments of Sepoys at Phillaur:—a distinguished company of brave men, who had played their parts in life right gallantly. Out of the strong cometh sweetness: none could doubt this who saw these old comrades together, and

witnessed the tenderness with which they treated "Musha," once so gay and magnetic, but now bent and shattered like a riven oak.

Nor was Mrs Graham missing—a precious link with the past.

These last days were unmarred by suffering. Watched over by his wife and carefully tended by his old trained nurse—Margaret Hudson, a skilled masseuse—taking his daily drive, his long siestas, his smoke, and his pottering walk about the wooded lawn, he passed painlessly past his eightieth year. But the time was at hand when, in spite of all the mitigations love and science could devise, the grasshopper became a burden and thoughts of the long home came with balm on their wings.

The spectacle of his ebbing life—hardly a month passed without robbing him of some enjoyment—was pathetic, but not wholly sad: inspiring rather, for, as power after power fell away, the shining of the inner deathless spirit became more clear, and it came to seem that valued physical faculties had impeded the passage of its radiance. Little by little all that was unessential dropped away, until at last the autocratic man of action was sublimated into an incarnation of gentleness and love, into a being anxious only for the welfare of those about him, whose heart was full of thankfulness for the affection and material comfort in which he was lapped, and whose mind brimmed over with happy memories, echoes at first of India and of long-ago stirring days. But these in time grew dim; what stood by him to the end were the old heroic German poems which he had learned as a boy at Hofwyl, and which he now began to recite with kindling eye and feeble but eloquent gestures: poems which resumed his boyhood's enthusiasm for gallant deeds.

"Gott lob dass ich singen und preisen kann,
Singen und preisen den braven Mann."

Thus—confident in the power of One whose strength is made perfect in weakness—Alex Taylor's life drew to its close. After having dared death in many forms, he passed quietly away—with those who were nearest and dearest to him at his side—at midnight on 10th February 1912, aged 86.

> "Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
> Ease after war, death after life, doth greatly please."

"It was not what he did, though that was splendid, which made us prize him so," said one of his comrades, "but what he was."

The War Office proposed that Sir Alex should be buried with military honours, but his family felt that he would have wished his funeral to be as unostentatious as his life had been. He was laid to rest, therefore, in the precincts of the village church—not far from the grave of his predecessor at Coopers Hill and companion at Delhi, Sir George Chesney—in the presence of a number of neighbours, many of his College Staff, and a few of his old comrades at arms—Sir Frederick Maunsell, Sir John Watson, General Pemberton, and others—a small party of octogenarians. General Sir John Ewart, Aide-de-Camp General in Waiting to the King and Adjutant-General of the Forces, was present as representative of the King, having been graciously sent by his Majesty to express his high sense of the services rendered by his loyal servant.

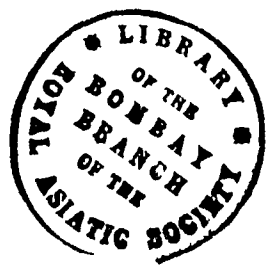
The members of his Corps have placed his portrait—painted for them by Edmund Brock—in the Engineer Mess at Chatham, where it now hangs in the company of old friends—Lord Napier of Magdala and Sir Henry Yule—and of such distinguished brother-officers as the great General Gordon and Lord Kitchener.

In view of the misunderstandings which have obscured full and general knowledge of the work done by Sir Alex during the siege of Delhi, members of his Corps—led by Sir Frederick Maunsell—his few surviving comrades and old friends, and certain of his country-men and country-women —led by Lord Roberts — have determined to erect his statue outside the walls of Delhi, and thus to perpetuate the memory of the daring and able reconnaissances which paved the way to the capture of the capital of the Mughals, and to link his name throughout the ages with that of a city which—like Rome, always a capital—is once again the heart of the Indian Empire.

This statue[1]—in which the young Royal Engineer is conceived as both soldier and thinker—is destined to rise near the Mori Bastion. Not far from it—opposite the Kashmir Gate—is the beautiful garden which enshrines the figure of John Nicholson.[2] Close to this garden, the hero's dust lies under the great protective slab placed over it by his friend, Neville Chamberlain.

John Nicholson, Neville Chamberlain, and Alex Taylor: these names, and the memory of the gallant Delhi Field Force, should live in the hearts of those who inherit a city restored to the Empire at the price of heroic effort.

[1] By Charles Hartwell.
[2] By Sir Thomas Brock, K.C.B.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